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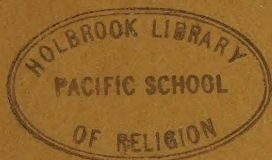
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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

JAN 20 1925

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



JANUARY 1925

LIVING CONSECRATION

Issued by

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

LA CRESCENTA, L. A. CO., CALIF.

(Extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, Established 1909)

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1925

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Christmas at Ananda-Ashrama	Sister Daya
Swami Paramananda and His Work	Sister Devamata

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

(Extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, Est. 1909)
La Crescenta, California

SWAMI PARAMANANDA

Of India, Founder and Head

SERVICE WITH ADDRESS

ASHRAMA CLOISTER

Sunday, 3:30 P. M.

- Jan. 4—Vitality of Faith
11—Self and Efficiency
18—The Goal of Life
25—Spiritual Magic

The aim of the Ashrama is to provide a truly non-sectarian place of worship and to create an atmosphere and inspiration conducive to practical idealism.

CLASS LECTURES

Tuesday, 3 P. M. Thursday, 8 P. M.

In these classes the Swami will give lessons in practical spiritual unfoldment.

When the Swami is absent, Sister Daya will conduct the services.

We urgently request our subscribers to send their renewals as early as possible that the January number may be mailed to them promptly. We also beg to suggest that a year's subscription to the "Message of the East" would make a fitting New Year's gift.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

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1 **Message of the East**



VOLUME XIV

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tyndall.

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No. 1

LIVING CONSECRATION

By Swami Paramananda

(Address delivered at dedication of Ashrama Cloister)



ET all things that breathe—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path!"

"In the East and in the West, in the North and in the South, let all beings that are—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path!"

This is from one of the greatest and most ancient Scriptures of the world, but its value does not lie in the fact that it is ancient or that it is given in some sacred book; its value is due to its all-embracing thought and its true spirit of catholicity. There is a saying by Jesus the Christ, showing the sense of kinship which exists in all that is true in life: "Blessed are the peacemakers, (blessed are those who bring peace upon the earth) for they shall be called the children of God." How universal these words are, how applicable to our own life! No matter where a man stands, if he has any manhood, if he has any sense of nobility and justice, he cannot help but recognize the vital truth in this. A man may be filled with intellectual gifts, with the spirit of scientific invention, or he may be in the religious life, it

makes no difference. Science has not succeeded in destroying the souls of men and it will never succeed. There is a deeper hunger and thirst in the human soul. That hunger must be fed, that thirst must be quenched; and there is nothing which can do it save that which springs from the very source of our being. Whether a teaching comes from the East or from the West, whether it comes from one religion or another is of small consequence, so long as it sounds the true note, so long as it gives the true hypothesis for life and living. The man of vision has very little use for the dry crust of dogma, or for anything that is of non-essential nature. He believes in higher living, in nobility, love, forgiveness; in that which produces a truer type of humanity, a living symbol of what is best and highest in our life. These qualities are the essence of religion and may be attained by one path or by another.

For many, many thousands of years we have had numerous religions, but they have not all been constructive; some have been just the contrary. Because of this, those who have given themselves to scientific lines of thought often scoff at the very mention of religion or God. People talk of love and non-resistance and all sorts of things that are high-sounding; yet they go to war to destroy one another. That is not religion. That is not godliness. Not only is it not religion or godliness, it is not humanity. It is the brute instinct in man that leads him to be destructive. For this reason anything that will revive our higher sense, we must welcome; a beautiful sight, a sound that has music in it, whatever kindles the soul nature in man, we must welcome. Atmosphere, environment, or any form of living that is conducive to higher idealism, we must learn to welcome with all our heart. This will bring a definite help in our spiritual life.

I am not seeking to establish a new cult or creed. There are plenty of creeds already existent; another would be only one too many. Nor am I interested in a new dogma or in occult mysteries. I have only one fundamental interest uppermost in my heart and that is interest in humanity, its betterment, its unfoldment, its all-embracing unity. With these lofty and noble ideals we have established this work. Whether many or few understand our purpose is not our concern. The most any of us can do in life is to live; and often we have to live very silently, like a flower. A dewdrop falls upon an unpretentious bud, and it opens. The bud is quite unconscious of it and the dewdrop falls without noise, but it brings the blossoming. Whoever comes near it enjoys its fragrance.

There are certain high and lofty ideals in life. They are not high and lofty because we can talk of them and quote passages about them from various Scriptures; they are high and lofty when they make our life equally so, when they bring something into our life of which we can be proud, something which we can carry to humanity, something that fills the hearts of men, something which is conducive to greater idealism and greater usefulness. What a wonderful thing it would be if all men and women or if even a very small group of men and women could be so armed with Truth, with the feeling of love and beauty, that they would go forth into the world every day carrying their ideal as a living symbol; so that no matter what the world might do to them, even if it outraged them, they would always hold up their head and glorify their ideal. Would it not minimize many of the cruel inharmonies in the world?

Sometimes we are unjust when we say this world is full of materialism and evil. What makes it evil and material? We have our share in it. If the world is full of materialism

it means that we are carrying materialistic thoughts into it. If we cannot trust humanity, there is something wrong in our hypothesis. It is not ordained from the origin of things that we should live in chaos, or with distrust and without the feeling of love and cheer. In order that we may have these superior qualities, we do not need to cling to cut and dried dogma. We must go deeper into our life, we must think for ourselves. We must not think merely of our physical interest, wherefrom our food may come, how we may clothe ourselves and how we may keep ourselves warm. These are ordinary instincts; even animals possess these instincts; they know how to look for food and go for shelter. We are in no way better when we merely foster these instincts of physical life. There is a better part in us, the God-part, and this the philosophers and mystics, the prophets and religious men cherish with greater devotion than common man gives to his bodily life. When this comes into ascendancy, we live in a purer atmosphere and we bring a purer atmosphere into the world. Then no one can come in contact with us without feeling benefited. Sometimes a cruel man is disarmed of his cruelty when he comes in contact with some one who is noble and forgiving and free from all harmful thoughts.

This is where we have a tremendous responsibility in life. We have formed the habit of calling certain things natural. Some one hurts us and we immediately feel that we are justified in being angry, that it is altogether natural for us to feel hateful. It is not natural for a man to be angry and hateful. It is a most unnatural thing. Even physical science tells us that it is unnatural, because it shatters our whole constitution. Our human body suffers from it. Whenever we yield to such feelings and encourage them in ourselves or in others, we cannot help but bring a very disas-

trous condition in our own life and in the life of the world. The solution of living, then, means that we must first cleanse our own house. In this lies the whole secret of true happiness and progress. We do not need to go out to preach and convert people. The best thing we can do is to live a life that is a true symbolic expression of our faith.

By faith I do not mean following a creed or a dogma. These may sometimes prove very dangerous and degrading. They sometimes cause a man to cling to his own religion and condemn everything else. Think of two people trying to divide the infinite sky overhead, saying: "This part belongs to me and that to you." It is equally absurd when people in their fanatical zeal try to divide the Infinite Majesty who is not limited by time, space or nationality. Blind belief can never redeem us or the world; it is rather what we are able to express through our life. We cannot perhaps convert any one else to our faith, but we can convert ourselves. We can live it. If we believe in love, we can live in love; we can create an atmosphere of love and purity and of all that is beautiful. Those who are at the same point of evolution will feel it; those who are not, may condemn, but their condemnation will not lessen its worth.

In spiritual life we require courage. Sometimes we have to stand alone. If the measure of success lay in public recognition, the very first year of this work would have been the last one. The measure of success is not in what others give us, but in what we ourselves receive from the joy of giving. Our concern is how much we are able to give, not what we may get from people; that is the leading spirit of our work. We have gathered here, a band of consecrated workers, not because we want something for ourselves, but because we believe in the power of this ideal. Suppose we stand alone, that does not make any difference. It only

makes us stronger. Whenever we stand alone with any ideal, that means it is deeply rooted. There is no religion that can put a stamp on God and claim a monopoly. There is no one big enough to say: "I hold the key to the mystery of the universe." We all hold the magic key of the universe in our own hand. Every soul has a secret sanctuary within; and when that is unlocked, another life unfolds; and in that unfolding we realize the fulfillment of our individual life and that of the world.

The world is not bad, but we can make it bad. The world is not dark, but we can make it dark. There is a beautiful parable that Gautama Buddha gives of a learned man who thought that he knew everything, and that there was no one equal to him. Because of this, he decided that the world was full of darkness and of ignorance, so whenever he went out he carried a lighted torch in his hand. One day a sage asked him: "Why do you carry a torch in broad daylight?" "Because the world is full of darkness", answered the scholar. "My friend", replied the sage, "the world is not full of ignorance, the world is not in darkness, but your own eyes are blind. The beneficent light of the sun is shining before you, behind you, above you, everywhere. Do you not see it? How can you say that this world is in the dark?"

When we blindfold our own eyes, whether it is through prejudice, ignorance, suspicion, false ideals or grief—there are many ways we can blindfold our eyes,—we condemn ourselves and we condemn others. In this work we hold no thought of condemnation. We have nothing against any religion or any human being who is trying to live his life and express his ideal in his own way. As that beautiful ancient Scripture says at the beginning: Let every one follow his own path, going forward freely and cheerfully, without ever striking a discordant note.

Dedication of a place can only be accomplished with a sense of spiritual presence. We can build castles and churches and magnificent palaces, but sometimes they are cold and lifeless. No place is of any great interest or benefit to people unless it becomes living and vibrant; and we make a place living by our own life, by our love and our interest in humanity. There are people who can go aloof, away from the world, and give themselves to meditation and to higher thinking. Perhaps they can find peace. It is far easier to find peace when we go away, that is, if we have the understanding; but it is far greater when we can forget ourselves in the thought of others. That is what I call true dedication and true consecration. There may be many obstacles. Whenever we are in public work, whenever we are trying to do something for others, we must always expect to be misunderstood. Is it wrong to be misunderstood? No. Christ was misunderstood. Buddha was misunderstood. All great men have been misunderstood. I think it is the measure of their greatness, that the world cannot understand them. So if we have a message, if we have a mission, if we have the flame of love and the sense of service within us, we must be able to endure all things.

Those who have the sense of consecration, who have a message that is all-inclusive and beneficent, they must be able to stand alone. Strength will come, because the source of strength lies not in our individual selfish self. It lies in that which gives us life and consciousness. Whenever through ordering of our life and consciousness we find our access to that source, we become a channel, an instrument, for bringing into this world that which is beautiful and beneficent. I hope and pray that those who come within the radius of this work may be imbued with this spirit, and that they may carry that message out into the world, because

the world needs it. If anything is needful in this world to-day, it is tolerance. It is very easy for us to fall into a rut, into a narrow sphere of life, and think that what we have is all in all; but it is ruinous for the individual, for the community, for the nation; and it is a very great barrier to world-progress.

We must be willing to sacrifice our individual self-interest in order to realize a larger interest, a greater fulfillment. This alone will produce an exalted type of humanity, of which the world is in great need. If there is anything that stands in our way, we must be rid of it in order that we may realize unity. No true religion at heart is opposed to this. There is but one God, not two or three or ten gods; there is but one. This thought runs through all Scriptures—Mohammedan, Chinese, Hebrew, Christian. You can quote it from any one of them, and from the Hindu sacred classics, written far back, perhaps four thousand years ago. We find the same thought in all—that there is but one God. When we are convinced that there is a God and that we are children of that great Infinite Being, then shall we find a point of contact, then shall we realize that there is one Fatherhood; and because there is one Fatherhood, there is also an established brotherhood, that all men are brothers. In that consciousness we shall find true peace.

I, Divine Mind, myself am present with holy men and good, the pure and merciful, men who live piously. To such my presence doth become an aid, and straightway they gain knowledge of all things and win the Father's love by their pure lives, and give Him thanks, invoking His blessings and chanting hymns, intent on Him with ardent love.—*Hermes Trismegistus*.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

The true church is not a separate mass of people, not a particular sect to be pointed out with the finger, not confined to one time or one place; it is rather a spiritual and invisible body of all the members of Christ, born of God, of one mind, spirit and faith, but not gathered in any one external city or place. It is a fellowship seen with the spiritual eye and by the inner man. It is the assembly and communion of all truly God-fearing, good-hearted, new-born persons in all the world, bound together by the Holy Spirit in the peace of God and the bonds of love,—a communion outside of which there is no salvation, no Christ, no God, no comprehension of Scripture, no Holy Spirit and no Gospel.—*Sebastian Franck, 16th Century.*

There are Brahmanas (God-knowers) all over the world.—*Asoka.*

False zeal is a tyrant who depopulates lands; toleration is a tender mother who fosters and cultivates them.—*Fredrick the Great.*

It is necessary that we should be cautious in our writings, but splendid in our actions. . . . Perform great things, at the same time promising nothing great.—*Demophilus.*

That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform.—*Deuteronomy.*

A generous man compassion shows to bad as well as good, to all. He knows on earth no mortal lives who does not often fall through weakness.—*Ramayana.*

A man should never be ashamed to say he has been in the wrong, which is but saying in other words that he is wiser to-day than he was yesterday.—*Pope.*

The more ideals a man has, the more contemptible, on the whole, do you continue to deem him, if the matter ends there for him; no courage shown, no privations undergone, no dirt or scars contracted in the attempt to get them (his ideals) realized.—*W. James*.

The man of noble character will bear with the man who is unlike himself, he will be kind to him, gentle, ready to pardon on account of his ignorance, on account of his being mistaken in things of the greatest importance; he will be harsh to no man, being well convinced of Plato's doctrine that every mind is deprived of truth unwillingly.—*Epictetus*.

BE STEADFAST IN TRUTH

Extract from letters of Swami Vivekananda

(Written to a Western Disciple and hitherto unpublished)

Be you holy and above all sincere and do not for a moment give up your trust in the Lord and you will see the light. Whatever is truth will remain forever; whatever not, none can preserve. We are helped in being born in a time when everything is quickly searched out. Whatever others think or do, lower not your own standard of purity, morality and love of God; above all beware of all secret organizations. No one who loves God needs fear any jugglery. Holiness is the highest and divinest power in earth or in heaven. "Truth alone triumphs, not untruth. Through truth alone is opened the way to God." Do not care for a moment who joins hands with you or not, be sure that you touch the hand of the Lord. That is enough. . . .

I went to the glacier of Monte Rosa yesterday and gathered a few hardy flowers growing almost in the midst of eternal snow. I send you one in this letter hoping that you will attain to a similar spiritual hardihood amidst all the snow and ice of this earthly life. . . .

Your dream was very, very beautiful. In dream our souls read a layer of our mind which we do not read in our waking hours, and however unsubstantial imagination may be, it is behind the imagination that all unknown psychic truths lie. Take heart. We will try to do whatever we can for the good of humanity,—the rest depends upon the Lord. . . .

Well do not be anxious, do not be in a hurry. Slow, persistent and silent work does everything. The Lord is great. We will succeed, my boy. We must. Blessed be His Name. . . .

Here in America are no Ashramas. Would there was one! How would I like it and what an amount of good it would do ti this country!!!

A TRUER DREAM

By Swami Paramananda

In this world of dream, my soul,
dream a truer dream,

Whose mighty pulse will lift thee
to a high pinnacle and make
thy body vibrant with new life.

Dream, my soul, of that happy realm
where joy abides alone in
unbroken oneness, and life
reigns in eternal surety.

Dream, my soul, where love dwells
in harmony, and beauty in
its virgin loveliness.

Dream of divine ecstasy whose eternal
melody is sung by all created
things.

Stop not dreaming this great dream
till its image speaketh to
thy soul with living tongue.

THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH MAN

*From a Dialogue between the Sage Astavakra and
King Janaka*

Weary of the endless diversity of speculative methods and conclusions, the wise one seeks repose and cares not to invent, or listen to argument, or refute.

The man of lofty aspirations feels no distractions.

The humble-hearted, wise man works without a sense of ego.

The mind of the liberated man shines like a lamp, its flame unagitated by ego or care. His doubts have vanished, all his fancies are gone and the world has lost its attraction.

Having no selfish incentive to thought and no selfish motive for action, he still thinks logically and acts well.

Listening to discourses on Truth, the man of slow understanding becomes dull and narrow.

The foolish one tries but fails to withdraw from the field of frivolity. The wise one retires at the dawning of Truth.

The pure, rational, beautiful, perfect, intangible, spotless Spirit cannot be known by those who are slaves of habit and slow of soul.

The stupid man, by a constant soulless repetition of prayer, succeeds not in securing liberation. Blessed is the man who apprehends Truth and attains freedom.

The ill-trained man thinks that the Spirit is one and pure, but he has not definite knowledge of it. He is ignorant and lives a life of desire.

The fearless soul of the liberated one does not place any reliance upon creeds and dogmas. He lives in peace.

He who has listened to the Truth, whose vision has become clear and mind independent, overlooks the artificial conventionalities of the world, leaves behind all sectarian narrowness, and rises above indifference.

He performs in a simple manner whatever duty demands of him. Like a child he does everything in a joyous spirit, without any idea of agreeable or disagreeable results.

It is generally seen that the foolish man is not quick to discover an opportunity and use it to his advantage. But hope of gain, and self-interest count not for one who is unattached.

The undeveloped man is often a prey to cares and void of high thoughts. The wise man, having a sound mind in a strong body, though ever thoughtful, is void of care.

The wise man behaves like a child. In no undertaking does he look for reward. He works with a mind purged of the pride of ego.

CHRISTMAS AT ANANDA-ASHRAMA

The impalpable spirit of Christmas brooded over Ananda-Ashrama on the afternoon of December 24th. Without, an icy wind from the snow-covered ranges of the north blew with unexampled fury; within, where the Christmas Eve Service was to be held, all was silent with an inner peace and radiant with an inner joy. The wind broke itself in vain against the stillness of this sanctuary. Long rows of ruby vigil lights glowed upon the different levels of the massive stone fireplace which suggested some primitive high altar with its great grey rocks from the Ashrama hills, its garlands and greeneries, its flaming candles in branched candlesticks and its two small shimmering trees all silver and white which caught the rosy light from the vigils. At the end of the room against a softly tinted hanging stood the Christ-Child altar bright with lights and flowers. Marigolds,—flower of the Virgin and flower of India,—held up their golden heads and formed a frame for the little picture of holy Mother and Babe. At the foot of the altar two more

little silver-white trees glistened and glowed and sparkled.

There was a question in the hearts of those who waited in the quiet room. Would the wind and cold isolate the Ashrama? Many had to come long distances and the afternoon was for bedding. But stronger than wind is the pull of the Spirit. They came, the friends of the Ashrama, they came over the separating miles, they came with frozen fingers but with warmth in their hearts, so that at four o'clock the big room was well filled. Just a whisper of voices, the tiny song of the Christmas candles and then Swami Paramananda was in the room quietly giving his Christmas message. It was a message of light, light in the heart where there must be eternal vigil, where the Christmas candles must always burn; light in the home radiating out over the world. The Christ-spirit, the Buddha-spirit, does not come with pomp and noise; it comes like the dawn, silently.

“Hail to Thee, Thou who comest at morn with gentle raiment, to open our sleep-worn eyes!

Not in dazzling splendor, but with soft white light . . .” read the Swami from one of his latest poems, a song of adoration to the dawn. He read the poem over twice that its true meaning might be caught and held. As at the Service on the preceding Sunday when the Swami spoke on “The Universal Christ”, the great note of universality and tolerance, of all-embracing unity, was sounded and sounded again. There was music, Christmas carols by the Ashrama choir and a lovely Russian hymn sung by a Slavic member, whose voice has a peculiarly pure and devotional quality. Every heart seemed overflowing with something that could not be put into words as the prayer brought the Service to its close. All seemed to feel that it was a rare spiritual experience, a very unusual experience.

That evening the Ashrama choir had planned to sing Christmas carols along the streets of La Crescenta, after the old English custom. But the member with the harp-guitar who was to play the accompaniments, said that his hands would freeze and the other members were sure that their voices would not carry above the roaring of the wind, so the carol singing had to be postponed till next year. When this was definitely decided those who had lingered were rewarded for their delay by an impromptu feast, a Christmas supper cooked then and there by the Swami under sudden inspiration. It was a large and happy circle that waited round the open fire while the feast was being prepared. The member with the harp-guitar played softly and sang and finally all joined in the Christmas carols.

After the supper the Swami read from his unpublished book of poems and crowned the evening with two Bengalee hymns to the Divine Mother which he sang at the special request of one of the members. Thus the guests went away carrying his song in their hearts like a fragrant memory.

In India an Ashrama is a sacred place of retreat for Sages and God-seekers. India's spiritual glory has sprung from its Ashramas. They are places of pilgrimage. Ananda-Ashrama proved on Christmas Eve that it also is a place of pilgrimage, which draws people in spite of all obstacles because of the yearning in their hearts for that which it has to give. America no less than India needs Ashramas. In this respect the letter from Swami Vivekananda written many years ago and placed in Swami Paramananda's hands some months after the founding of the Ashrama is of real import:

"Here in America are no Ashramas. Would there was one! How would I like it and what an amount of good it would do to this country!!!"

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(The Introduction appeared in July and Chapters I-IV in subsequent numbers of 1924.)

V

LIFE AS A BRAHMACHARIN

My knowledge of Swami Paramananda's early religious life was gathered chiefly in India. He had many warm friends in Madras, Bangalore and Calcutta, who were glad to talk of him. I have always believed that the loving welcome I received in Madras was due in largest measure to the fact that I had been sent to India by him. Swami Brahmananda spoke of him always with the deepest affection, and now and then would relate some incident of his first days at the head monastery on the Ganges. He told me one evening, I remember, how much comfort and relief the Swami had brought him by his gentle touch when he was recovering from an attack of fever; and how invariably pleasing and refreshing he found every service that he rendered him. On one occasion when a second mail went by without bringing any word from the Swami, Swami Brahmananda showed the keenest anxiety and said almost as if he were scolding: "Tell the boy he must not leave us in this way without news. Tell him he must send a few lines, at least, every week."

From Swami Ramakrishnananda I learned most. He felt for the Swami such love as a widowed mother bears an only child. It was one of the deepest, most sacred feelings of his heart; and he was never tired of talking of their life together in Madras. I recall one day when he stood looking intently at a picture of the Swami for several minutes, then he turned to me and said: "Paramananda lived with me for six years and I was never able to find a single fault in him." This was a glowing tribute, coming as it did from one who was known to be the strictest disciplinarian of the

Order, so uncompromising in his demands on those who had taken up the religious life that many of the Brahmacharins (novices) shrank from his rigid training.

Basanta, the name by which the Swami was generally known during his novitiate, did not remain long at the head monastery after his admission. Swami Brahmananda felt that a more natural and fitting place for his strongly devotional nature was with a great devotee like Swami Ramakrishnananda. Also the President of the Order deemed it wise to put him for a while out of reach of those in his family who might harass him by threats or insistent persuasions to return home; so he was sent to Madras. The precaution almost proved abortive. At that time there was no through train and Swami Brahmananda arranged to have him break his journey at Puri, in order that he might make a pilgrimage to the ancient holy temple of Jaggernaut. At the Temple he ran against his aunt and a cousin, who also had come on pilgrimage to the Temple. He tried to avoid them; but they recognized him in the crowd and seized upon him. They did their utmost to thwart his efforts to continue southward. He remained unbending in his determination, however; they had no authority to check him; so they were forced to let him go on his way. A passion of spiritual fervor flamed within him. It made him unmindful of the loneliness and strangeness and discomforts of the journey. He sat in the corner of the railway carriage lost in meditation, barely touching food or moving from his seat during the entire interval of forty-eight hours.

Swami Ramakrishnananda gave him a joyful welcome. He had seen him in a dream sometime before; but the boy of his dream had had dancing eyes and thick waving hair parted in the middle, while the Brahmacharin who came to him had shaven head and in his eyes shone a graver light,

from the newly kindled fire of renunciation burning in his heart. This variance troubled Swami Ramakrishnananda, for he regarded the dream as full of auspicious promise; so scarcely had he greeted Basanta before he asked him how he had worn his hair when he first came to the monastery. Great was his satisfaction when he found on the smooth head a faint line where a part had been. His premonition about the dream was amply verified. He often told me that the Swami brought to him fresh life, inspiration and joy; that it was like a new birth for him. His care of the young Brahmacharin became one of his happiest concerns; and one of the workers at the Madras monastery told me he cherished him so tenderly that he would not let any one lay his hand on the boy, lest the touch might be too rude.

Basanta's feeling for the elder Swami is shown in these sentences from letters written to me while I was in India: "Now that you are in Madras and near a great soul, do as he wants you to do. I am not even worthy to carry the shoes of such great souls." "You do not need much of my advice nowadays, being constantly near an illumined soul." He gave to Swami Ramakrishnananda a rare love and reverence and was always overjoyed to serve him. When he came to America and could not render him personal service, he sought to be of use to him in other ways. He dedicated all the proceeds of the sale of his first book to Swami Ramakrishnananda and his work; and as his other books came out, he sent them freely in any quantities ordered, with the understanding that no return was to be made for them. There is in my keeping a letter from Swami Ramakrishnananda, in which he tells with loving pride that for sometime the monastery at Madras had been maintained by the sale of the Swami's books.

The elder *Sannyasin* (monk) and the youthful Brah-

macharin lived together in what was known as the American ice-house—a large building with phenomenally thick walls, which had been constructed by an American Company for the storage of ice to cool the sun-heated people of Madras. The undertaking was a failure and the house had been transformed into a dwelling. It was occupied by a gentleman who had become a warm admirer of Swami Vivekananda during Swamiji's first visit to South India; and when Swami Ramakrishnananda came to Madras, he offered him the use of the first floor. It was several steps below the ground; and although the depth of wall made it cool, it was also dank and dark.

"There was nothing in it when Paramananda came", Swami Ramakrishnananda told me one day, as we sat in the hall of the new monastery at Mylapore, a suburb of Madras. "But as soon as he arrived, things began to pour in. There is no doubt he is a pet child of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune). I had had nothing to tell me the time. The first offering brought was a clock. Then a gentleman gave us some cots, another gentleman some chairs, and soon the place was quite well fitted out."

There was no luxury, scarcely comfort, and no idleness. They rose early and their first care was for the Shrine, which Swami Ramakrishnananda had established as soon as he reached Madras. The brass vessels used in worship were scoured with wood ash and tamarind. The vegetables were cut for the daily curry, which made up their one real meal. Then when bath, worship and noon meal were over, they would spread their mats, set out a low reading-desk, cover it with a freshly-washed cloth, and for two hours they would chant in the original Sanskrit and translate the Ramayana or the Mahabharata, the great sacred epics of India. Swami Ramakrishnananda was a remarkable

Sanskrit scholar; and it was this daily study with the tried teacher which gave to the younger student his rare understanding, not merely of the letter, but of the spirit of Sanskrit, so evident in his later translations of the Bhagavad-Gita and the Upanishads.

The days passed simply,—in worship, meditation, study and work. Often Swami Ramakrishnananda was away for classes and lectures. It was on one of these occasions of absence that the Brahmacharin made his first attempt at cooking. Swami Ramakrishnananda had been relentless in refusing to let the boy do anything in the kitchen, overheated by an open hearth fire. On this special day Swami Ramakrishnananda was very late in returning; nothing was ready for the noon offering to the Lord, so the Brahmacharin lighted the fire and began the noon meal. The dishes cooked were so delicate and savory, with so sweet a flavor of joy and devotion in them, that Swami Ramakrishnananda declared he had not tasted such food since he had left Bengal. This gave great encouragement to Basanta, who was trembling with anxiety lest his cooking might not be palatable or even edible. After that, Swami Ramakrishnananda grew more lenient and allowed Basanta to prepare the offering for the Shrine from time to time. Everything was cooked and everything was done for the Lord in their humble loving service. What they ate was to them literally the “remnant of the sacrifice,” as it says in the Bhagavad-Gita.

Although the kitchen was now open to him, there was still continual contention between the older and younger companion regarding the division of labor. Swami Ramakrishnananda insisted on keeping all the roughest tasks for himself, and he was unwilling to have Basanta practise the least austerity. He would say to him: “You do not need it.

Leave that for boys of coarser fibre." One day soon after Basanta arrived, he noticed some unusual red lines on his arm. He inquired what had caused them, and when he found they were the marks of the coarse straw mat which the boy spread on the floor for his bed, he hurried to the bazaar and came back with a cot, a quilt and some soft pillows. That night Basanta lay down on his bed sad at heart that so many comforts were being forced upon him.

He longed for opportunities to deny himself. Swami Ramakrishnananda was equally intent on seizing every opportunity to indulge him. It was a constant unspoken conflict between them. To escape from it, Basanta planned secretly to run away to the wilderness somewhere, in order to gain the privilege of real renunciation; but not long after he conceived the idea, he was wakened in the middle of the night by the quick touch of Swami Ramakrishnananda's hand on his face, his arm, his body. "You are still here," Swami Ramakrishnananda said in anxious tones. "I just had a dream that you had gone. Promise me that you will never go away without telling me." Basanta promised. Then Swami Ramakrishnananda talked to him until nearly dawn of the benefits and disadvantages of practising austerities, showing that it could harm as well as help, by putting undue strain on a delicate body. "Your body was not meant for such things," he said to Basanta as he left him. Basanta had promised to stay, but he still felt rebellious. At last in silent protest he shut himself up in his room and would not come out or eat for twenty-four hours, filling in his time by writing his first article—on "Freedom,"—later printed in the Bengalee magazine, the "Udbodhana," and mentioned with admiring comment by several publications.

Swami Ramakrishnananda's devotion for the boy was shared, perhaps in lesser degree, by many. The members

of the large family in the great house overhead showed him warm affection. The elder ladies especially brought him frequent offerings of sweetmeats and dainty dishes, which made him feel very shy and uncomfortable. There were also two gentlemen, exceptionally brilliant lawyers at the Madras bar, who came every afternoon after office hours in shining carriages with clanking harness to the Marina, the wonderful driveway along the seafront of Madras, bordered on one side by rolling surf and on the other by the University and government buildings with their beautiful gardens. These gentlemen would leave their carriages at the curb near the ice-house and walk up and down on the broad stretch of sandy beach, invariably ending their walk at the monastery door. Their first question always was, "Where is that Beaming Intelligence?" They had given Basanta this name when they had first seen him, before they knew his real name; and they still clung to it because they found it so eminently descriptive of him.

Basanta still gave great joy by his singing, as he had done in his childhood. Swami Ramakrishnananda took great pride in it and often invited a number of friends to hear him. There was likewise a group of Bengalee gentlemen, resident at Madras, representing the large English paper manufacturers, John Dickinson and Co., who invited him frequently to their house for an evening of music. Sometimes he paid more distant visits. One of these was to Vayambadi, a few hours' journey from Madras. A great devotee of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda lived there. He had never seen them, but he had learned to reverence them profoundly through hearing about them from Swami Ramakrishnananda; and he longed to dedicate his life to their service. Outer conditions made it impossible for him to join the Order, so he built a little Temple, where

every Sunday he preached to a large gathering, giving as best he could Sri Ramakrishna's teaching of tolerance, unity and all-embracing love. His position in the world was a very humble one and he had only what he earned from a stall in a local bazaar, where he sold dry goods and notions. With such modest resources, however, he opened a night school for low-caste boys and later one for girls. Both grew rapidly and became of the greatest helpfulness to the community. Every day the children gathered in the Temple for religious instruction, which he himself gave them; and he sought in every way to foster the highest ideals in their minds.

On Sri Ramakrishna's birthday he was in the habit of taking a life-size picture of the Master, winding round it bright and fragrant garlands, placing it on a platform upheld by bamboo poles, and carrying it to every house of his village. All the little children of both schools with many others followed after, singing holy songs; and the parents came with him, the men carrying flaming torches to light the way as night fell. Along the streets of the village each window-sill and veranda rail had its close row of flickering rustic lights—earthen saucers of oil with floating wicks; and earnest souls would run out with offerings for the Lord and refreshment for the singers. Sometimes the procession lasted until far into the night.

It was among these simple devout people that Basanta spent some time. The founder of the Temple and the schools had gone to the monastery at Madras to see Swami Ramakrishnananda and had met the new Brahmacharin. Feeling the spiritual charm of his gentle youthful personality he had begged him to return to Vayambadi with him. He even tried to induce him to remain there permanently. Basanta could not consider this, but he consented to go for a brief

interval. His visit was made an occasion for general feasting and rejoicing. The children exhibited their various talents; they sang for him, and he sang for them; and finally he was persuaded to speak for them in the Temple. He gave quite a lecture, but he told Swami Ramakrishnananda afterwards that he almost fainted from shyness. He paid other visits later on and the whole community grew to look for his coming; but Swami Ramakrishnananda was reluctant to have him go, fearing the effect of the heavy food and continual festivities on his frail constitution. "I was afraid they would kill him with their enthusiasm and devotion," he said in telling me of it.

Except for infrequent interruptions like this, the daily routine moved along its quiet way unbroken for nearly six months. Then suddenly one day in early October, near the time of the *Durga Puja*, the great Divine Mother Feast in Bengal, a letter came from the President of the Order calling Basanta back to Calcutta. Swami Brahmananda wrote that certain members of his family, indignant over the boy's persistence in his new life, had threatened to sue the Ramakrishna Mission for admitting a minor. The President thought it would be better for him to return to the monastery on the Ganges, go on from there to his home in East Bengal and come to some definite understanding with his family. Soon after reaching Calcutta, however, Swami Brahmananda fell ill, and he found special pleasure in the delicate, loving care which the young boy gave him; so Basanta stayed to nurse him and the visit to his native village was forgotten.

(Chap. VI. "Final Renunciation" will appear in February number)

Who learns and learns, but acts not what he knows is one who ploughs and ploughs, but never sows.—*Sufi Saying*.

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CONSTRUCTIVE THOUGHT

Class Lecture by Swami Paramananda



EEP students of the human constitution know that our thoughts, whether high or low, come to us according to the attitude we take; and these students mark in our constitution certain centres which correspond to our different attitudes of mind, to our aspirations, to the sum total of our inclinations. If a man possesses low tendencies, it only means that his mind is focused on a low centre. But if the same mind becomes focused on a high centre, then we find that person aspiring to lofty ideals. It is like climbing. Your objective is the mountain-top, but as you climb you go through varied grades, and as you rise your vision unfolds, the view grows more extended and your interest changes. It is impossible for a person standing on a low level or on the plain to conceive of what you are beholding as you ascend towards the heights. According to our position our vision shifts, and according to our vision we are inclined to act. We cannot control our action whimsically. It is only as we control our thought, as we train it to remain focused on a high point, that we are able to work out our physical life satisfactorily. This is one of the truths people overlook. No outer form of training can possibly improve us until our inner centre of vision is established.

What do we mean by one centre or another? Let us find a term more nearly related to our life, to our interests;

something that will give us a key to practical wisdom. What are we trying to do and how may we accomplish what we are striving for? Everyone wants to achieve success in life. There is no one who does not want to succeed. When people say they do not care whether they succeed or fail, it is not that they do not want to be happy and successful; but through constant failure and defeat they have come to accept a morbid state of mind which does not represent what they really desire. Such a condition of mind is degrading, it means that they have fallen into a lower centre of consciousness. What we should cultivate within us is the opposite attitude. Through training, through practice, we can learn to keep our mind on a high level; then all our actions must correspond. I say "must" because there is no other way that the physical life can act. Our senses, our nervous system, our physical being, are constantly responding to our mental state.

Our physical life and our inner life are inter-related. When a person is mentally disturbed, see how quickly every fibre of his being responds and shows a corresponding reaction. Similarly, when a person is calm and composed mentally, his physical being grows calm; his nervous system is restored, his eyes become steady, his whole body is without a tremor. Sometimes a person accomplishes this unconsciously, because his mind is creating in him a centre of rest and peace. These are facts. Some people recognize them as facts, but they think it is not in their nature to have a composed attitude. There are many who argue: "I was born restless. My nervous system is differently organized from others." These are fictitious arguments. We create our own restlessness and also we create that peacefulness which sometimes manifests within us.

If we want a life that is balanced, full of co-ordination

and order—and that means a life that is fruitful—we must cultivate the right attitude of mind. We cannot have a fruitful life without these qualities and they do not come accidentally. They come through our mental attitude. A person cannot have his mind fixed on a high level without transforming his whole life. I can find no word which is so expressive as transformation. Our life does become transformed actually. But it does not become transformed merely by some superficial mental theory. That is the reason why we find in this world so many people with intellectual concepts who can talk glibly and who have plenty of theories, yet who in their practical life are absolutely barren. Many, in fact the majority of people, are on this plane of mental concepts and nothing beyond, and even these do not influence their life. Their mind creates a tremendous amount of excitement which soon dies away. That which enters into our practical living brings us the greatest benefit, but we cannot practise something other than what we ourselves absolutely believe in. Certain ideas become a habit with us and are constructive factors in our life. When some ideal or perhaps some person is very dear to us, we find our whole thought, our whole action, everything transformed.

It stands to reason we cannot think of one thing and do another; that is, we cannot be on one plane of consciousness and act as if we were on another. We have to be on the same plane as that which we desire to express through our life. That is the reason why in India the great teachers, the Yogis, worked out a regular scale of centres in the physical body. If a man is full of ordinary animal propensities, there is a reason for it; he has lowered his standard and his mind dwells in the lower centres. If a man is intellectual, he has raised his standard and his consciousness

out of sight before faith. Yes, faith is at the root of all spiritual progress. Thou canst do without all other things; only thou must have faith."

We can have faith in lesser things and we can have faith in the greater and according to our faith shall we receive. How many miracles of Christ were made possible because of the faith of the recipient. Even in the material world what can we do without faith? It is the road of all achievement. No scientist ever accomplished anything without it. Robbed of our faith we are robbed almost of our life. It is the supreme instrument of accomplishment and it is in the hands of every man. There is no limit to what it can do. It is the secret of miracle in all religions, of all the wonders we read of in the lives of the holy.

We say we have faith, but how do we show it? Have we the faith to lay down our lives in absolute trust? It must be more than a belief that God will take care of us. That would imply a selfish concern. No drop of egotism must poison the faith of the God-aspiring soul. He must know that whatever comes to him can come but from that Source. He will not sit supinely waiting for that Power to act. He himself will act with surrendered heart, with supreme trust that God will direct his actions. Armed with such living faith what is impossible? Christ gave but one formula for magic in all His Gospel: "If ye have faith even as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto yonder mountain, remove hence and it shall remove". This transcendent faith, this supreme love was the secret of the Christ miracle, the Buddha miracle, the miracle of every divine life that has ever been lived. It was because of this that Gautama Buddha forbade absolutely the performing of miracles within his Order. He knew how easily the hearts of men

are englamoured and therefore he held before them constantly the one pure Light, the Wonder of wonders. If the religion of Christianity had rested merely on the outer miracles of Christ it would not have survived a generation. It is because of the miracle of the Christ life that it has endured through the centuries. Religion is not a system of dogma; its strength does not lie in outer signs and marvels. The very word religion conveys to us the spiritual idea behind it. Re-ligio: to bind back,—to bind the human soul back to God. In this sense religion must always be united with the miracle of redemption and that is impossible without faith.

Let us absorb the truth of this into our very being and make it our own. We seek the hidden and mysterious when the very innermost secrets of life have been laid before us since the beginning of time; not only laid before us but urged upon us through the ages: "Have faith—have love—seek the Kingdom within—all things shall be added." Are we deaf, are we blind that we pass these things by so lightly? Have they become for us merely words? Let us shake off our dullness. Let us cease scattering our forces in a thousand directions and bend all our energies towards the one, simple truth of God in our soul. Let us pray for nothing less than faith, nothing other than love—love for the Divine. Let us be unwavering in that prayer in the face of hunger, want and even death. Then shall we see whether divine words are ever spoken lightly, or divine promises unfulfilled. Swami Paramananda puts it all in these few lines: "Miracles are only performed where there is fitness of condition. There is a miracle of love. You can perform this miracle of love. You can perform this miracle of faith. When a man is inspired by love what can he not do! He will jump into the fire; he overcomes even nature through sheer force of selfless love."

these the practical life becomes ordered and focused. That life is steadfast which is fastened to a definite point. The life that is fluctuating is very unsatisfying to the individual. No one likes to be tossed about. We do not like indecision even in ordinary matters. Indecision eats up our vitality, it weakens us; and indecision always comes through lack of knowledge, through lack of equilibrium. Decision never fails to come when our gaze is steadfast. In India they call this state of mind *ekagra*, one-pointed. Christ speaks of it as making the eye single. He means the same thing, one-pointedness; and we cannot be one-pointed unless our interest is one-pointed.

We cannot pretend anything; but the unfortunate part is that the majority of people think they can pretend outwardly, no matter what they have within. We must make our mind and mouth one; thus has it been spoken simply by a great teacher in India. When a man has learned to make his mind and mouth one, he has accomplished his purpose; that is, his exterior and interior nature work in rhythm. The best type of life is that which runs in rhythm; which is not always calculating "What shall I say," "What shall I do," or "How shall I conduct myself," but is established in a certain rhythm which carries it. This is a part of individual training and that training we can all acquire through our daily life, through our habits of living and through discipline.

Discipline is a very essential thing in every man's life, because it is the basis of strength. This may sound stern and hard. Why should we discipline ourselves? Discipline requires that we make sacrifice. But it is not really sacrifice. It only means trying to keep up our standard. If there is a low propensity, ignoble thought, or some tendency that would drag us down, to discipline that and to maintain

our standard means conquest, victory; and it always brings the individual to a higher form of manifestation. Our inward power grows. We leave a great part, in fact the biggest part, of our life unmanifested when we merely surround our mind and consciousness with physical being, its limitations and imperfections. But to our inner life there is no limit. We set the limit by our mental attitude and the quality of our thought.

MINDFULNESS OF GOD

From the Adi-Granth

(Sacred Scriptures of the Sikhs, containing the teaching of their Leader, Guru Nanak)

The state of him who remembers God cannot be told.

If one tries to tell it, he repents of it afterward;

There is not paper enough, nor pens, nor writers.

Sitting silent, they reflect on him who remembers Him.

Such is the power of the Name of the Supreme Being.

If one is mindful of Him, he knows Him in his mind.

If one is mindful of Him, there arises intelligence and wisdom in the mind.

If one is mindful of Him, knowledge of the whole world comes.

If one is mindful of Him, he does not go with the Lord of Death.

Such is the power of the Name of the Supreme Being.

If one is mindful of Him, he knows Him in his mind.

If a man remembers Him, he is not stopped on the road.

If he remembers Him, he becomes known with honor.

If he remembers Him, he does not go proudly his way.

If he remembers Him, he is joined with virtue.

Such is the power of the Name of the Supreme Being.

If one is mindful of Him, he knows Him in his mind.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

As it is very difficult to gather the mustard seeds that escape out of a torn package and are scattered in all directions; so when the human mind runs in diverse directions and is occupied with many things in the world, it is not an easy task to collect and focus it.—*Sri Ramakrishna*.

We must not lower the level of our aim that we may more surely enjoy the complacency of success.—*Ruskin*.

Before you do anything, think of God, that His light may precede your action.—*Sextus, the Pythagorean*.

Our imagination so enlarges the present by dint of continually reflecting on it and so contracts eternity by never reflecting on it, that we make a nothing of eternity and an eternity of nothing; and all this has such living roots in us, that all our reason cannot suppress them.—*Pascal*.

Even from poison may nectar be taken; even from a child, gentleness of speech; even from a foe, prudent conduct; and even from an impure substance, gold.—*Laws of Manu*.

Give not thy tongue too great liberty, lest it take thee prisoner. A word unspoken is, like the sword in the scabbard, thine; if vented, thy sword is in another's hand. If thou desire to be wise, be so wise as to hold thy tongue.—*Francis Quarles*.

By the serenity of his thoughts a man blots out all actions, whether good or bad. Dwelling within his Self with serene thoughts, he obtains imperishable happiness.

If the thoughts of a man were so fixed on God as they are on the things of this world, who would not then be freed from bondage?—*Maitrayana-Brahmana-Upanishad*.

SIMPLICITY OF SPIRIT

From Letters of Isaac Penington

(Quaker Mystic, 17th Century)

Wait on the Lord in humility of heart and in subjection to what He inwardly by His Spirit daily makes manifest; that thou mayest come into the change which is wrought in the heart and conscience by the holy, eternal, ever-living power.

Thou hast found the pearl; the Lord, in mercy to thee, has discovered to thee the true pearl. Now, this remains: that thou be a wise merchant, selling all to purchase it. Thou must keep back nothing. The living Truth, the holy power of righteousness, must be dearer to thee than all. If father, mother, livelihood, liberty, friendship, outward advantages, or anything else, be dearer to thee than He, He will look upon thee as unworthy of Him; and cannot but turn from thee, and suffer hardness and darkness to come again upon thee.

Be faithful in the little, in the day of small things, if ever thou desire to enjoy and be ruler over much. But be thou simple like a child, not taking care what to answer wise professors nor what to answer the reasoning of thy own mind; but seeing thou hast felt the demonstration of Truth from God's Holy Spirit, O breathe unto the Lord to preserve thee in the innocency and simplicity thereof, that the Lord may still be with thee.

O Friend! hast thou a sense of the way to the Father? Then be careful that thy spirit daily bow before Him, and wait for breathings to Him from His pure spirit, that He would continue His mercy to thee; keeping thee in the true sense and making thy way more and more clear before thee every day. Yea, and bearing thee up in all the exercises and trials which may befall thee, in every kind; that, by

His secret working in thy spirit, and helping thee with a little help from time to time, thou mayest still be advancing nearer and nearer towards the Kingdom; until thou find the Lord God administer an entrance unto thee thereinto, and give thee an inheritance of life, joy, righteousness and peace therein; which is strength unto the soul against the sorrow and trouble which ariseth in the mind, for want of God's presence and power revealed there.

GIVE UP SELF

By Swami Paramananda

I give my peace unto thee,
 but thou must give up self.
 Be not affrighted, my child,
 There is no loss in giving up self.
 Fear brings the anguish
 and it brings the doubt;
 But doubt, anguish and fear
 will all leave thee
 When thou hast given up self.
 I shall dwell in thee
 when thou hast given up self;
 Nay, I shall possess thee, fill thee
 and own thee
 When thou hast given up self.

Ananda-Ashrama.

October, 1924.

The human body is a steed that goes freest and longest under a light rider, and the lightest of all riders is a cheerful heart.—*John Burroughs*.

He who loses wealth loses much; he who loses a friend loses more; but he that loses his courage loses all.—*Cervantes*.

FAITH AND MIRACLE

By Sister Daya

Once an earnest seeker came to the Lord Buddha and questioned Him as to miracles. Said the disciple: "So sayest thou there are no miraculous and wonderful things?" And the Blessed One replied: "Is it not a wonderful thing, mysterious and miraculous to the worldling, that a man who commits wrong can become a saint, that he who attains to true enlightenment will find the path of truth and abandon the evil ways of selfishness? The disciple who renounces the transient pleasures of the world for the eternal bliss of holiness, performs the only miracle that can truly be called a miracle."

Never did any great teacher more clearly define the value of so-called miracles and their place in true religion, yet religion and miracle have been related in the mind of man since the beginning of time. Is it that humanity doubts its spiritual vision to such an extent that it feels some outer sign is necessary to place the stamp of divinity on an inspired life? Surely the Magdalen needed no sign, no water turned into wine, to convince her that He who touched her heart and made it blossom with new faith, was a Master of miracle. The world will acclaim the one who gives sight to the physically blind, but being blind itself spiritually, it is unaware of the greater miracle,—the opening of the eyes of a soul.

The supernatural or supernormal is not always a sign of spiritual power. Sought for as an end in itself it becomes merely a psychic expression and may be accompanied by egotism, arrogance and selfishness, the very antithesis of spirituality. But coming as the result of lofty yearning, as an incident to the spiritual life, it partakes of the true miracle of holiness. There are undoubtedly finer realms of

life, subtler laws of being, beyond man's material control but responsive to the mind and will. When mind and will become purified on the long road to divine vision, they may manifest what seems to be supernatural powers. This often is an unconscious manifestation. In the case of great illumination where the soul is all but merged in the Infinite, omniscience floods through it, as it were, breaking forth in the miraculous. But the real miracle from which this proceeds is forever invisible. That which can be seen and sensed is always under Law. Spirit alone "bloweth where it listeth", and who can behold its swift touch upon a soul, its sudden flame dispelling darkness. The true miracle of the heart can thus never be profaned by the gaze of the curious, for only God can enter that sanctuary, nor can it be misinterpreted by the vulgar. Not so with the lesser miracles. Though they may be the fruit of holiness their appeal is seldom holy. They furnish material for dogma, intolerance and fanaticism. Those who have eyes to see need no proof of the soul's immortal nature, no resurrection can give them a deeper vision of the eternal Christ than they already possess. For them the outer miracle has its beauty and sacredness because of the true miracle which it signifies. It is the golden lettering on the holy missal, the words of the divine song.

The majority of men are bound by the laws of life as by iron chains, therefore anything that seems to transcend those laws, to break those chains, is grasped for with clutching fingers. The worker of outer miracles will never lack human following, whereas the worker of the divine miracle may seem to stand alone. Few there are who seek God for His own sake, who have but one thought, one desire: to give to the Divine. They flock to Him when there appears to be a chance of gaining something immediate and definite

for themselves. As in a fire men trample upon each other in the rush for safety, just as madly do they besiege one who they think may be the dispenser of health, wealth or success, even casting the spiritual gift aside for the sake of these apparent benefits. Small wonder that the Teacher looks upon them with compassionate eyes. They are suffering and they are blind. They cannot see that the miracle of holiness would give them all that they seek and infinitely more. They are like children with their toys, not yet prepared for life's realities.

But miracles may arouse faith, you say. That may be true for the heart that is temporarily obscured by some dark night of the soul; to the skeptical and doubting mind, however, they bring no real message. What materialist was ever permanently convinced by wonder-working? He soon doubts either the evidence of his own senses or the good faith of others. Not so with the miracle of a holy life. Again and again a word or a touch from an illumined soul has transformed the blackest, the most stubborn of hearts. Do not think that the holy ones of God go forth with the idea of doing anything miraculous; their minds are utterly given to the Divine. The miracle is the outgrowth of their being. We cannot help but express what we are. If we would manifest God-like powers, we must be God-like, and that we can never be if we seek or desire anything less than God. When we have found Him, have united with Him, then His power works through us. He may send us forth or draw us away to solitude and silence, and who knows what may flow through our hearts and hands. Such surrender requires supreme faith. Faith is the life-breath of miracle. Sri Ramakrishna says: "Faith is omnipotent. Before it the powers of nature all shrink and give way. What is more, sin and iniquity, worldliness and ignorance all go

out of sight before faith. Yes, faith is at the root of all spiritual progress. Thou canst do without all other things; only thou must have faith."

We can have faith in lesser things and we can have faith in the greater and according to our faith shall we receive. How many miracles of Christ were made possible because of the faith of the recipient. Even in the material world what can we do without faith? It is the road of all achievement. No scientist ever accomplished anything without it. Robbed of our faith we are robbed almost of our life. It is the supreme instrument of accomplishment and it is in the hands of every man. There is no limit to what it can do. It is the secret of miracle in all religions, of all the wonders we read of in the lives of the holy.

We say we have faith, but how do we show it? Have we the faith to lay down our lives in absolute trust? It must be more than a belief that God will take care of us. That would imply a selfish concern. No drop of egotism must poison the faith of the God-aspiring soul. He must know that whatever comes to him can come but from that Source. He will not sit supinely waiting for that Power to act. He himself will act with surrendered heart, with supreme trust that God will direct his actions. Armed with such living faith what is impossible? Christ gave but one formula for magic in all His Gospel: "If ye have faith even as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto yonder mountain, remove hence and it shall remove". This transcendent faith, this supreme love was the secret of the Christ miracle, the Buddha miracle, the miracle of every divine life that has ever been lived. It was because of this that Gautama Buddha forbade absolutely the performing of miracles within his Order. He knew how easily the hearts of men

are englamoured and therefore he held before them constantly the one pure Light, the Wonder of wonders. If the religion of Christianity had rested merely on the outer miracles of Christ it would not have survived a generation. It is because of the miracle of the Christ life that it has endured through the centuries. Religion is not a system of dogma; its strength does not lie in outer signs and marvels. The very word religion conveys to us the spiritual idea behind it. Re-ligio: to bind back,—to bind the human soul back to God. In this sense religion must always be united with the miracle of redemption and that is impossible without faith.

Let us absorb the truth of this into our very being and make it our own. We seek the hidden and mysterious when the very innermost secrets of life have been laid before us since the beginning of time; not only laid before us but urged upon us through the ages: "Have faith—have love—seek the Kingdom within—all things shall be added." Are we deaf, are we blind that we pass these things by so lightly? Have they become for us merely words? Let us shake off our dullness. Let us cease scattering our forces in a thousand directions and bend all our energies towards the one, simple truth of God in our soul. Let us pray for nothing less than faith, nothing other than love—love for the Divine. Let us be unwavering in that prayer in the face of hunger, want and even death. Then shall we see whether divine words are ever spoken lightly, or divine promises unfulfilled. Swami Paramananda puts it all in these few lines: "Miracles are only performed where there is fitness of condition. There is a miracle of love. You can perform this miracle of love. You can perform this miracle of faith. When a man is inspired by love what can he not do! He will jump into the fire; he overcomes even nature through sheer force of selfless love."

CHINESE MAXIMS

From the She-King

Do not speak lightly; your words are your own. Do not say: This is of little importance; no one can hold my tongue for me. Words are not to be cast away. Every word finds its answer; every good deed has its recompense.

Looked at in friendly intercourse with superior men, you make your countenance harmonious and mild, anxious not to do anything wrong. Looked at in your chamber, you ought to be equally free from shame before the light which shines in. Do not say: This place is not public; no one can see me here. The approach of spiritual beings cannot be calculated beforehand, but the more should they not be slighted.

I am pleased with your intelligent virtue, not loudly proclaimed nor portrayed, without extravagance or changeableness, without consciousness of effort on your part, in accordance with the pattern of God.

Thus King Wan watchfully and reverently with entire intelligence served God, and so secured the great blessing.

Let us not say that Heaven is high aloft above us. It ascends and descends about our doings; it daily inspects us wherever we are.

Great Heaven is intelligent and is with you in all your doings. Great Heaven is clear-seeing, and is with you in all your wanderings and indulgences.

God is with you, have no doubts in your heart.

To break the ranks of lions is but an easy
thing,

But reckon him a lion who over self is king;
He becomes God's lion—that, and nothing less,
Who by God's help conquers his own selfishness.

—*Jalaluddin Rumi.*

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(The Introduction appeared in July and Chapters I-IV in subsequent numbers of 1924. Chap. V in January number)

VI

FINAL RENUNCIATION

One early morning near the close of November, Swami Vivekananda was sitting with Swami Premananda on the long arched verandah outside the dining room of the Monastery at Belur, drinking a cup of tea, when he called Basanta to him and asked: "Khoka (child), can you beg for me?" The boy assented instantly. He did not know that this was one of the tests preliminary to receiving *Sannyas* (final vows of renunciation.) To him there was no element of test or humiliation in it; he was only content the master had asked a service of him. Swami Vivekananda then told him what he should do. He was to put on a ragged cloth and go from house to house in humble silence, giving no hint of who he was or whence he came. He should stand at the gate and wait for alms. If nothing was given, he should pass on; if something was brought, he should accept it, whatever it was; but he must speak no word.

When the boy was ready, he came back to Swami Vivekananda, who exclaimed in glad tones: "You do not know how happy it makes me to see you like that. How well it becomes you." "Wait," he added, "I will give you your first alms;" and he ran to the storeroom, took a little rice and some raw vegetables and dropped them into the begging bag. Then he sent the boy out along the dusty, sun-beaten road. His way was not an easy one. At one house he was strongly rebuked for leaving his parents; at another, a group of gentlemen read him a long lecture against begging; at several others all the ladies of the house wept over him, saying: "Have you no mother to keep

you at home? You are too young and delicate, too little used to hardships, to take up such a life. It hurts us to see you as a ragged beggar, how much more must it hurt your own people." At another place they would not take him seriously, but exclaimed: "Your rags are only a disguise, you are merely playing at begging. Are you a prince?" Basanta heard everything in silence. Once only did he make reply and that was by a mute gesture of refusal, when some one wished to give him money.

He returned to the Monastery about noon and laid the fruits of his begging before Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji was overjoyed, and calling Swami Premananda, he told him to use a little of it each day for the offering in the Chapel. "There is no holier offering than this pure food begged by a pure soul. Sri Ramakrishna was especially fond of such food," were his words. He then asked Basanta if he could cook, and the Brahmacharin answered "Yes." He really knew very little about it, but he was confident that knowledge would be given him if he went about his task with prayerful devotion. Swamiji waited until two o'clock for his mid-day meal. All the others at the Monastery had eaten two hours before, but he would have only what Basanta was preparing. When at last it was set before him, he declared that he had never tasted sweeter food; and he told the boy to give some to each member of the Monastery. "Food begged by such a pure heart must purify whoever eats it," he said. The Brahmacharin himself he fed from his own plate, which in India is one of the tenderest expressions of loving commendation a master can give a disciple.

A few days after this, news came to the Monastery that the husband of Basanta's eldest sister, a high official in the service of a native ruler, was lying dangerously ill at his

home in Calcutta. Basanta went to see him at once. When he entered the sick room, the brother-in-law was moved by such intensity of feeling that despite his extreme weakness, he rose up on his bed and embraced him. He passed away a short time after. Being a man of exceptional qualities, his death meant a great loss to the family. The President of the Mission sent Basanta immediately to his home in East Bengal to console them. At the same time he told him to reach some definite agreement with his father about his future course of action.

The father and his entire household were in such joy over his coming that they almost forgot their grief; and they spent themselves in attempts to break down his resolution and draw him back to the world. They even tried to persuade him to marry. Nothing, however, could turn him from his chosen vocation; but he showed no impatience at their efforts. He gave of himself generously to every one, playing with the little children, talking over family perplexities and difficulties with the older members, and doing his utmost to shed brightness and comfort on all. Especially did he seek to bring consolation and peace to his aging father. Once more he sang holy songs to him at the twilight hour, as in his boyhood; he read aloud the sacred books of those earlier days, and shared with him his deeper thoughts. This close spiritual companionship was very sweet to the yearning heart of the elder man and he longed to have it continue indefinitely; but a stronger power was at work, one he could not conscientiously oppose. At last his full consent to the new life was given, given sadly, it is true, but with frankly acknowledged reverence for his son's unfaltering dedication to what he knew to be a loftier ideal. How fully the son has justified his father's sacrifice is known to all those who have followed the Swami's life of

tireless devotion to mankind. It is to be regretted that the father did not live to enjoy the fruits of this sacrifice, but he was already seventy years of age and passed away a few months later.

While Basanta was in his village home, Swami Vivekananda sent for Swami Ramakrishnananda to confer with him regarding some important matters in the Mission. Swami Ramakrishnananda himself related that he had been at the Monastery beside the Ganges only a short time when Swami Vivekananda inquired of him: "What has become of that young Brahmacharin who came from Madras and whose body was so shining and full of light?" Swami Ramakrishnananda replied: "He is with his family." Swami Vivekananda asked again: "What is he doing there so long?" Swami Ramakrishnananda wrote this to Basanta. The boy had been away about a month and was already growing restless and eager to be once more at the Monastery, but he shrank from inflicting the pain which he knew his going would cause his father and the whole family. The letter now provided an urgent reason for cutting short his visit and a few days later he was again at Belur.

It was not long after this that Basanta received *Sannyas*. Swami Vivekananda approached him one day as he sat near the banyan tree behind the Monastery and asked him abruptly: "Would you like to become a Swami?" Basanta was overwhelmed with surprise. There were young men who had been in the Order three or four years, yet who were still Brahmacharins; and it was customary to extend the novitiate over a much longer period than he had served. His reply, however, was given without faltering,—he was willing to do whatever Swamiji wished, and the question implied what Swamiji's wish was.

The ceremony of giving *Sannyas* is never public. It is

for the master and disciple alone. The formal preparation for it is brief and simple. The real preparation has taken place during the varying probationary intervals, when the Brahmacharin is subjected to many tests and disciplines. The Upanishads are full of accounts of disciples who served for years on lonely mountain-tops, tending the master's cattle; or who kept solitary vigil beside the sacred fire while the master made long pilgrimage to some distant shrine. It is told that one disciple lived with the great teacher Sankaracharya for eleven years before a word was spoken to him by the master. It is through such days of patient, undemanding service and submissive waiting that the heart is made ready to enter the next stage of spiritual life. Here and there, however, is found a heart so purged and selfless that it has no need of these preparatory disciplines.

When the time for initiation is at hand, the Brahmacharin begins his preparation by dyeing a new cloth flame color, doubly symbolic,—of the purifying fire of renunciation and of the flame of wisdom kindled from that fire. In Bengal and elsewhere in Northern India the dye is made by rubbing a wet stone on a special rock so hard that a saying runs, the neophyte who has the patience to dye his cloth will have patience enough to bear bravely all the hardships of his future life of denial. The paste gained by the rubbing is dissolved in water and makes a bright orange or *gerua* color. The cloth is dipped in this, hung up to dry and laid away for the initiation. The day preceding the ceremony, the Brahmacharin's head is closely shaven, all except a small lock on the crown of the head. A Brahmin priest then comes and performs the regular funeral rites, to typify the death of the Brahmacharin as a man of the world and his re-birth as a man of God; or the passing

into another realm of existence, in which all values are reversed. Henceforth the personal must yield at every point to the universal; and giving up becomes the measure of privilege, not acquiring.

On the day of the initiation an altar fire is lighted and oblations poured upon it as symbols of the Brahmacharin's past, which must be consumed that a fresh life of selfless consecration may spring from the ashes of the old life. The master then ties the flame-colored cloth about the loins of the disciple. The religious name is given, and the remaining lock on the head is cut to signify the severing of all worldly ties, that they may be rebound on a loftier, more inclusive spiritual plane. Nothing is destroyed; everything is expanded and exalted. The individual's family becomes merged in the larger household of the whole human race, which the Sannyasin must serve with self-forgetting devotion and impartial loyalty.

It was by such rites as these that on full-moon day in January, 1902, Basanta became Swami Paramananda. At the ceremony, however, he sat by the sacrificial fire between Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ramakrishnananda, who shared the sponsorship of his new vocation. Although it was Swami Vivekananda who gave him *Sannyas*, it was Swami Ramakrishnananda who nurtured and watched over his spiritual life. When in the beginning Swami Brahmananda had sent him to Madras he had said to him: "Stay with Swami Ramakrishnananda for three years and everything will be done. Your character will be fully formed in every way. Nothing more will be necessary."

The ceremony of *Sannyas* over, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ramakrishnananda each wished to keep the young Sannyasin with him. Swami Vivekananda was setting out for Benares and asked Basanta to accompany him—he still

clung to the boyish name. Swami Ramakrishnananda was returning to Madras and begged so insistently to take the boy back with him that Swami Vivekananda waived his claim and the new Swami once again turned his face to the south. (Chap. VII. "Years in Madras." March No.)

THE HAND OF THE SPIRIT

Extract by Dr. Carl Patton

It is not where nature puts you, nor what sort of robe she throws around your shoulders, but what spirit lives within you that counts. And this spirit in which you live, though it is the most intangible thing about you, is after all the most manifest. You cannot hide it if you would. It gets into your gait, makes you drag your heels or lift them, and throws your chest out or drops it down between your shoulders. It gets into your voice and gives it the ring of the bugle or the whine of the bagpipe. It gets into your speech and turns your common conversation into a paean or a dirge. It gets into your face, turns the corners of your mouth up or down, makes crow's feet around your eyes, and writes its name in lines that the smallest child can read. Into every little word or action the unseen hand of the spirit in which you live, squeezes the juice of laughter or tears, and seasons everything you do with the essence of victory or defeat. Almost anything else about yourself you can hide—your age, the condition of your wardrobe, but the one thing you cannot hide is the invisible, tangible something we call your spirit. That goes before you wherever you go, like a pillar of cloud by day. It stays behind you wherever you have been, like a pillar of fire by night. Deceive yourself about anything else if you want to, but make no mistake about this—the one thing about you that everybody knows is the spirit in which you live.

REPORT

On January 5th, after three months at Ananda-Ashrama, Swami Paramananda was once again eastward bound with the Vedanta Centre of Boston as his destination. According to his custom he broke the trip midway, stopping at St. Louis, Cincinnati and Dayton. It was the Swami's intention to remain away from California at least six weeks, but a sudden change of plan is bringing him back in time to conduct the regular Sunday afternoon Service at the Ashrama on February 8th. During the early months of the year, hardly a day goes by that fails to bring its visitors to the Ashrama from the eastern states, for this is the tourist season in California. How did these voyagers from far-distant points hear of the Ashrama? This question is often asked the strangers who come and their answers only go to prove how subtle and far-reaching are the connecting threads that draw people here. One young couple were led through having purchased five bound volumes of the "Message" at a book stall in Los Angeles. Some ladies from Onteora Park, N. Y., had heard the Swami speak there when he was the guest of Dr. William Norman Guthrie. They had only recently learned of the Ashrama and were delighted to renew their connection with something that had given them such true inspiration.

Lately a new department of the work has been organized by the Swami,—the Department of Arts and Crafts. The first of its activities has been incense making. Under the Swami's guidance, sweet smelling herbs were gathered from the Ashrama hills. These were ground with various Indian spices and then moulded, much as they make the incense sticks in the Indian monasteries. These with hand-illuminated book marks, pretty book covers, picture post cards with views of the Ashrama, are giving the Ashrama workers ample opportunity for artistic expression, thus helping to bring about the fulfilment of one of the Swami's dreams for the work.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



MARCH 1925

CIVILIZATION AND SPIRITUALIZATION

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"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tyndall.

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CIVILIZATION AND SPIRITUALIZATION

By Swami Paramananda



WHAT is civilization? What are the distinctive marks of a civilized man? How does he differ from the uncivilized? It is right that we should have definite answers to these simple questions. To-day almost everywhere we hear the loud cry to save civilization. It is seldom that we can pick up a newspaper or a magazine of any worth without reading something along this line. We might attempt many superficial answers to these outstanding questions. We might say it is easy to differentiate a civilized person from an uncivilized by his manner of apparel or through the mode of his living. Richness does not make a person civilized, nor can poverty make one uncivilized. It does not consist in building up of trade or commercial exploitation, or any of these superficial means, even though they may have certain outer glamour. The distinctive mark of differentiation is in the standard of conduct. Perhaps we would better use the simple translation of the word "civilization," which means departure from brutal instinct, or reclaimed from savagery. If we have not risen above the instinct of brute passion, hatred, treachery and other low instincts common to all uncontrolled animal nature, although we may live in fine houses surrounded by great luxuries and material splendor, we are far from being civilized.

Let us turn our eyes back to what we call the dark ages, when man inhabited jungle-caves, satisfying his hunger by devouring raw flesh and fighting for it, as birds and beasts fight over a morsel of bread. His whole scope of life was limited to the narrow sphere of eating, drinking, sleeping and a certain amount of sense pleasure, until the light of intelligence enlarged his horizon and impelled him to drop his gross and unbecoming baseness and led him by its beneficent hand to a realm of greater beauty and a more enduring happiness.

Herein lies the basic difference between man and brute, cultured and uncultured, fine and gross, civilized and uncivilized. In other words, it is the dawning and unfoldment of rational instinct that places man above animals, civilized over uncivilized. Are we not all in one accord in regard to this? Do not all the ethical, moral and spiritual codes of both ancient and modern times acclaim this unanimously? Is it not the aim and object of true education that every child may receive the training to master his low instincts, such as lying, stealing, harming and all other forms of cruel and selfish impulses? Why is it that whenever we see some one who does not use self-control at his meals, we say: "He eats like an animal; how disgusting"? Does it not show definitely that man has a different standard? Again whenever we see some one under the sway of anger, hatred or similar passions, do we not often say he looks like an angry brute? Does it not signify that such instincts belong to a plane other than our own? Knowing this intrinsic and fundamental difference between base and noble, tutored and untutored, if we do not manifest a higher quality in our life, then we cannot claim our superiority over what we call savagery.

It is not merely a question of our mental grasp of the

ethical virtues that may place us in a high and exalted position. It is not a question of professing one faith or another. This quality must be a tangible and constant attribute of our life and conduct. Without question man's rational instinct is his best guide. It is his greatest asset, the most effective instrument for his achievement. Is not the evolution of science with its innumerable inventions a very great and tangible proof of this fact? There are many who will go so far as to say that science is the outcome of civilization, and that it is science which maintains civilization.

Now let us see what it has done for civilization. It has given us electricity, it has given us means for quick transportation and effective locomotion. It has given us means by which we can transmit a message from one end of the world to another in lightning flash. In short it has achieved much to make our life comfortable and smooth-running. Has it not given a nation power to protect itself against alien invasion? Has it not taught man to build invincible battle-ships and invulnerable fortresses? It is indeed the mightiest factor in our life and for our existence. Science has contributed in large measure for the comfort of mankind, for conveniences of living, for exchange of commerce, for the building up of international trade and relationship. In fact, it has done everything that should bring human hearts together, destroying all sense of distance and convincing man of his great heritage of a larger humanity. But has this been accomplished? The sword, the gun, the poison gas and other ingenious methods for destroying life may be the most astounding inventions of scientific genius, but they can never be the outposts of true civilization.

Now let us turn to religion—religion where a man seeks to find his highest ideal, religion which teaches man self-

denial in place of selfishness, religion which teaches truth in place of falsehood, religion which teaches gentleness in place of anger, religion which teaches forbearance in place of impatience, religion which teaches love, the most glorious fact in life, in place of hatred. Surely in religion we must find the fulfillment of life itself and all that is highest and loftiest that life can offer. "Why these are the very attributes that are embodied in the Christian Bible", a devout Christian may claim. "Let us therefore convert the whole world to Christianity." Will that make us civilized? Our experience and observation will prove to us that it is not the superficial acceptance of Christianity which will save us or give us the fulfillment and the ideal of civilization. The lofty principles which are inculcated in the Christian Bible are also to be found in the other great Bibles and classics of the world, but the fulfillment is only found here and there like a lone star in the conduct of human life. It has nothing to do with creed or dogma; it has to do with the clear expression of life itself.

Here I would like to draw a picture of a type which embodies a great standard of truly civilized man, possessing power but not using it for destruction, selfish aggrandizement, but only for beneficence, and I shall give this picture in the words of H. G. Wells, the eminent historian, "Asoka (264 to 227 B. C.) was one of the great monarchs of history whose dominions extended from Afghanistan to Madras. He is the only military monarch on record who abandoned warfare after victory. He had invaded Kalinga (225 B. C.), a country along the east coast of Madras, perhaps with some intention of completing the conquest of the tip of the Indian peninsula. The expedition was successful, but he was disgusted by what he saw of the cruelties and horrors of war. He declared, in certain inscrip-

tions that still exist, that he would no longer seek conquest by war, but by religion, and the rest of his life was devoted to the spreading of Buddhism throughout the world.

"He seems to have ruled his vast empire in peace and with great ability. He was no mere religious fanatic. But in the year of his one and only war he joined the Buddhist community as a layman, and some years later he became a full member of the Order, and devoted himself to the attainment of Nirvana by the Eightfold Path. How entirely compatible that way of living then was with the most useful and beneficent activities his life shows. Right Aspiration, Right Effort, and Right Livelihood distinguished his career. He organized a great digging of wells in India, and the planting of trees for shade. He appointed officers for the supervision of charitable works. He founded hospitals and public gardens. He had gardens made for the growing of medicinal herbs. Had he had an Aristotle to inspire him, he would no doubt have endowed scientific research upon a great scale. He created a ministry for the care of the aborigines and subject races. He made provision for the education of women. He made, he was the first monarch to make, an attempt to educate his people into a common view of the ends and way of life. He made vast benefactions to the Buddhist teaching Orders, and tried to stimulate them to a better study of their own literature. All over the land he set up long inscriptions rehearsing the teaching of Gautama, and it is the simple and human teaching and not the preposterous accretions. Thirty-five of his inscriptions survive to this day. Moreover, he sent missionaries to spread the noble and reasonable teaching of his master throughout the world, to Kashmir, to Ceylon, to the Seleucide, and the Ptolemies. It was one of these missions which carried that cutting of the Bo Tree, of which we have already told, to Ceylon.

“For eight and twenty years Asoka worked sanely for the real needs of men. Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Asoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Thibet, and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory to-day than have ever heard the names of Constantine or Charlemagne.” By giving the illustration of Asoka here, I am not advocating that people should all become Buddhists. It is not a question of embracing Buddhism, or Christianity, or Hinduism, or any other existing religion of the world. Our problem cannot be solved as easily as that. It is a matter of living—living our spiritual conviction; and if we do live according to our spiritual ideal, we shall not find any outstanding difference between one religion and another because they all teach what is highest and loftiest and truest in life; and as we live them we find the gulf of separation and all fictitious barriers melting away into nothingness, leaving us united as members of one undivided cosmic family.

It is strange that in spite of all the intellectual and moral education that we have in such abundance, the primal instinct of selfishness and savagery so continuously asserts itself in man. Is there no remedy for it? My object in discussing so frankly these existing evils is not to throw a slur upon education, science and religion, or to pull them down, but to find constructive expression through them. The invention of science is not meant for evil, but to give man greater opportunity for higher achievements. It becomes evil as it is utilized by man's

lower instinct. The aim of education is to give man understanding how he may master his lower propensities and become more and more self-possessed, just and kind. The goal of religion is to exalt the human to spiritual attributes and to make man conscious of his divine heritage. If, however, we fail to bring into manifestation these qualities in tangible form in our life, then we must admit that they utterly fail us and we utterly fail to grasp their real value, and our observance of these is mere superficial performance, lacking in true character and meaning. If any of our forces are now giving expression through low channels, it does not mean that we should ruthlessly destroy them, but we must learn to raise their standard.

Every force in man can be spiritualized. Things which are proving destructive now can be made constructive. The force within us which rouses in us blind greed and thirst for selfish gain can be transmuted into the bigger attribute of largeness of heart and compassion for others. We must learn to live our ideals, not merely theorize about them. Theories have no strength. It is the practical life that gives us strength. It gives us something to stand upon. Our high ideals become great factors in our character when they find definite expression through our thought and action, and this is the way we make spiritual life real and vital. Vague and visionary ideas, however lofty, help us little, as all speculative philosophy ever leaves us stranded without a proper working hypothesis.

Our need to-day is not a new philosophy, or a new religion, but a definite working out of the high principles already implanted within our heart and soul, whether they be from Christian sources, Chinese sources, Greek sources, Buddhistic sources, or the great ancient Indo-Aryan sources. When we learn to live them, we shall rise to a

great height of spiritual grandeur, leaving behind us all that is petty, sordid and detrimental to our progress and soul advancement. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven",—let this ever ring in our ears until its voice sings within our soul, stirs every pulse in our body and makes us living and vibrant with what is true, noble and lofty.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Some wise men, deluded, speak of Nature, and others of Time as the cause of everything; but it is the greatness of God by which this creation-wheel is made to turn.

It is at the command of Him who always covers this world, the Knower, the Time of time, who assumes qualities and all knowledge, it is at His command that this work of creation unfolds itself.—*Swetasvatara-Upanishad*.

And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the Lord have spoken and have done it.—*Ezekiel*.

Yea, I conceived of Thee as bounteous, O Ahura Mazda, when I beheld Thee as supreme in the actions of life.—*Zend-Avesta*.

They plotted, and God plotted, and God is the best of plotters.—*The Koran*.

"These sons belong to me, and this wealth belongs to me," with such thoughts a fool is tormented. He himself does not belong to himself; how much less sons and wealth!—*Buddha*.

All thinking beings have been made one for the other; they owe patience one toward another,—for we have all one and the same nature. We are created especially for the sake of one another. We are made for co-operation and to act against one another is contrary to Nature. The good man remembers that every rational being is his kinsman.
—*Marcus Aurelius*.

Be noble! and the nobleness which lies in other men, sleeping but never dead, will rise in majesty to meet thine own. Then wilt thou see it gleam in many eyes, then will pure light around thy path be shed, and thou wilt never more be sad and lone.—*Lowell*.

TRUE EDUCATION

By Swami Ramakrishnananda

(From conversation with a Western devotee in India.)

True education consists in the sacrifice of vanity and the manifestation of the God within.

There have always been sects who have believed that it is impossible to perform their worship without animal sacrifice. In reality no devotee can begin his worship without such animal sacrifice and the animal to be sacrificed is the ego. Until the ego is sacrificed one cannot hope to approach God.

Destruction of ego can be effected by humility. Low ground collects all the rain, so the lowly collect all the grace,—not only what falls on them directly but also what falls off from the unperceiving and proud. God's grace is on all, but some do not know how to receive it and so it drops away from them. . . .

It is good to go from place to place to do homage to holy men and women. Vedanta does not take away from us

our reverence for others. Although it teaches that everything is inside us, that nothing is outside, that we are infinite, still we know that what is true for us must be true for others also. If infinity is here, it is also there. It is everywhere. The only difference is in the manifestation. In trees and plants the manifestation is less, in animals it is more, in man still more, and in the man who has realized God it is full, so that man is God-like. In Sri Ramakrishna the Infinite was fully manifested, so through Him we can gain an idea of Godhead. In us it is less manifested, therefore we can go and do homage to those who show it forth more fully. Thus Vedanta does not take from us our humility and regard for others. On the contrary, it teaches us to bow down to God everywhere. . . .

When we sit in deep meditation the world may slip away from our memory and even memory itself disappear. But when we come back to the universe we still have our duties,—the duty of the child to the parent, of the disciple to the Master. We must not bring one condition into the other. With the disappearance of memory, the world also goes away, as in sleep; but so long as we remember, the world must exist for us and have some claim on us.

Tzu-King approached the Master and asked him how he might most truly practise virtue. Confucius replied, "If an artisan wants to do his work well, he must begin by sharpening his tools. Even so, you should serve the wise and good and make friends of men who have this moral virtue. The higher type of man makes a sense of duty the ground work of his character, blends with it in action a sense of harmonious proportion, manifests it in a spirit of unselfishness and perfects it by the addition of sincerity and truth. Then indeed is he a noble character.—*Confucian Teaching.*

NO EAST NOR WEST*By Swami Paramananda*

When thou journeyest westward thou canst
not leave east behind ;

Nor canst thou part from north when thy
feet are turned to the south.

The ray of the sun toucheth all quarters
And bestoweth on all its living, warming
balm.

The light of the soul knoweth no boundary
lines ;

It hath no east nor west, north nor south.

Yea, the light of the soul shineth every-
where,

Save when we keep our doors shut—

Alas, when we keep our doors shut !

POWER OF RIGHT CONDUCT*From the Mahabharata*

The high-souled Daitya chief, Prahlada, by merit of his right conduct snatched from the great god Indra his sovereignty over the three worlds. Indra, desirous of regaining his sovereignty, disguised himself as a holy Brahmana and went to Prahlada, begging to become his disciple. Upon Prahlada's consent the subtle Brahmana inquired, saying: "O chastiser of foes, by what means hast thou been able to win the sovereignty of the three worlds?"

Prahlada answered: "O regenerate one, I feel no pride in consequence of my being a king. I bear no malice. I am of righteous soul. I have conquered wrath. I am self-restrained and all my senses are under my control. Those regenerate ones that are my instructors pour beneficial instructions upon me like bees dropping honey into the cells

of their comb. I taste the nectar dropped by these wise men, and like the Moon among the constellations I live among the members of my race."

Thus spake Prahlada to the Brahmana. Served dutifully by him, the chief of the Daityas once more said: "O foremost of regenerate ones, I am exceedingly gratified with thee in consequence of thy dutiful right conduct towards me! Ask of me the boon thou desirest. Blessed be thou, for verily I shall grant thee what thou wilt ask!" The Brahmana said: "If, O king, thou hast been gratified with me, and if thou wishest to do what is agreeable to me, I desire then to acquire conduct like unto thine. Even this is the boon that I beg of thee." At this, though delighted, Prahlada became filled with a great fear. Wondering much, he said: "Let it be so!" The Brahmana, having received the boon, went away; but Prahlada became penetrated by deep anxiety and knew not what to do.

While the Daitya chief sat brooding over the matter, a flame of light issued out of his body. It had a shadowy form of great splendor and huge proportions. Prahlada asked the form, saying: "Who art thou?" The form answered, saying: "I am the embodiment of thy Right Conduct. Cast off by thee, I am going away. I shall henceforth, O king, dwell in the faultless and foremost of Brahmanas who had become thy devoted disciple!" Having said these words, the form disappeared and soon after entered the body of Indra.

After the disappearance of that form, another of similar shape issued out of Prahlada's body. The Daitya chief addressed it, saying: "Who art thou?" The form answered saying: "Know me, O Prahlada, for the embodiment of Righteousness. I shall go there where that foremost of Brahmanas is; for, O chief of the Daityas, I reside there where Right Conduct dwells!"

Upon the disappearance of Righteousness, a third form, blazing with splendor, issued out of the body of the high-souled Prahlada. Asked by Prahlada as to who he was, that form possessed of great effulgence answered, saying: "Know, O chief of the Daityas, that I am Truth! I shall leave thee, following the way of Righteousness!"

After Truth had left Prahlada, following in the wake of Righteousness, another great person issued out of Prahlada's body. Asked by the Daitya king, the mighty being answered: "I am the embodiment of Good Deeds! Know, O Prahlada, that I live there where Truth lives!" After this one had left Prahlada, another being came out, uttering loud and deep cries. Addressed by Prahlada, he answered: "Know that I am Might. I dwell there where Good Deeds are!" Having said these words, Might went away to that place whither Good Deeds had gone.

After this, a goddess of great effulgence issued out of Prahlada's body. The Daitya chief asked her and she answered him saying that she was the embodiment of Glory, adding: "I dwell in thee, O hero, O thou of prowess incapable of being baffled! Cast off by thee, I shall follow in the wake of Might." The high-souled Prahlada, penetrated with great fear, once more asked the goddess, saying: "Where dost thou go, O goddess, thou that dwellest amid lotuses?"

The goddess of Glory said: "That Brahmana who was instructed by thee was Indra. O puissant one, he robbed thee of that sovereignty which thou hadst over the three worlds. O righteous one, it was by this Right Conduct that thou didst reduce the three worlds to subjection. Knowing this, the chief of the celestials robbed thee of thy Right Conduct. Righteousness and Truth and Good Deeds and Might and myself, O thou of great wisdom, all have their root verily in Right Conduct."

DIVINE COMPANIONSHIP*By Fenelon. 17th Century*

Keep certain season for yourself, when you can draw closer to God. Read, pray, mistrust your own inclinations and habits, remember that we have God's gift in earthen vessels. Above all, strengthen your inner life with His Love. Even when one has lived far from Him, one need not fear to approach Him with familiar love. Talk to Him in prayer of all your weakness, your wants, your troubles, even of the weariness you feel in serving Him. You cannot speak too freely or too trustfully to Him. He loves the meek and lowly, and is ever ready to talk with them. If you are one of these, let alone all your cleverness and your great things; open your heart and tell Him all, then wait and listen to Him.

Place yourself before Him, so that He may put His own stamp upon you; let your whole being listen in silence for His Voice. Such silence to the outer world, to common passions and human thoughts within, is essential if you would hear that Voice which calls the soul to die to self and live to God in spirit and in truth.

One must become as little children; there is a lowliness which is far above all greatness. Happy they who find it! To argue, reason, discuss, and decide, is worth little; the thing is to love the one sole Truth and Goodness, and to abide firmly therein. Our minds will wander, but the will should be kept firm.

Try to be calm and cheerful. Be sure that God is the best Friend, and that no one comforts as He does. No one so enters into all our troubles, and heeds all wants without being wearied by them. Let Him be to you as your second self, and soon that will supplant the first self and lay it altogether aside.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(The introduction appeared in July, 1924. Subsequent chapters in successive numbers.)

VII

YEARS IN MADRAS

Once more in the familiar lower rooms of the ice house, which still served as Monastery, the two Swamis resumed their old routine. They rose before sunrise, opened the Shrine and carried the first offering of the day to the Lord. Often they were up at four, to spend the quiet hours before dawn in meditation or chanting, and the clear sweet voice of the young Swami was heard frequently in sacred song. There was one morning hymn which Swami Ramakrishnananda cared for so much that he requested him to sing it every morning at waking. When Swami Ramakrishnananda was nearing his end, he asked if any one knew the song; finding no one who did, he himself wrote out the words, remembered through constant hearing; Girish Ghose, the great dramatist, set them to music, and Swami Ramakrishnananda had them sung as he was passing. Who knows what tender memories arose in his mind of the one who had sung them to him so often at the dawning of the day!

To establish a Shrine in India implies unremitting service of a living Presence. This Presence naturally assumes some more definite and personal aspect of Divinity. The belief is that so long as our outer life is so intensely personal, in our approach to God we must have the element of personality to create a point of contact. If we serve an indefinite abstraction of Deity, our worship grows cold and alien to our daily living. We find all nations and races spontaneously seeking to establish a concrete relation with the Supreme by attributing to Him some human kinship, such

as Father or Mother or Child or by trying to reach Him through some divine incarnation. The Indo-Aryans are careful in their religious observances not to suppress or destroy this natural tendency. God in each household has His appointed place which becomes the centre round which the family life revolves.

No one leaves the house without going to bow down at the Shrine and invoke divine protection and guidance. No one returns without going first of all to greet the Lord. All food is cooked for Him and offered in the Shrine before any one partakes of it. He is tended as the most revered and beloved member of the family. A miniature bath is prepared for Him, flowers are grown especially for Him and daily laid at His Feet in worship. Every service that might be rendered a very dear mother or father is given Him, and no act of the day's routine is left unrelated to Him. To the more rational matter-of-fact Occidental mind this may seem like "playing pretend" with toys; but the result achieved is conclusive answer to all scoffing, for the Divine Presence becomes so vivid a reality in India that even the most critical are silenced and awed by it.

Thus did the daily activities of the two Swamis turn round the Sanctuary. Every thought, every word, every deed had the Lord's service for motive. Not even a glass of water was taken without a moment's pause for a prayer of oblation. Their whole life was one continuous act of worship. Leisure moments were few. There were numerous visitors. They began coming at six in the morning; many gentlemen of Madras choose the hours between six and eight for their visits. Troubles or doubts or questions brought them, or simple devotion and friendliness for the Swamis. Some came to see the new Swami, for Swami Ramakrishnananda talked of him to every one, and great

was their surprise to find the youthful face and figure, when from Swami Ramakrishnananda's words they had been led to expect a *sadhu* of mature years. As formerly, there were the vegetables to cut for the curry, the noon meal to prepare, and the vessels used in the Shrine to wash and polish. When Swami Ramakrishnananda was absent for an outside class or lecture, as often happened, all these tasks fell to the younger Swami who was over-joyed to take them. Then the sweeper woman came morning and evening to sweep up the heavy dust, which gathers quickly in a place like Madras without rain nine months of the year and not over-plentifully supplied with water; and the rooms had to be made tidy after she was through.

The two hours' reading from the Sanskrit Sacred Writings each afternoon was seldom missed; and there were occasional guests stopping at the Monastery. One of them, a Bengalee gentleman who had come from Calcutta for the National Congress, was seized with an acute attack of cholera while there, and the younger Swami insisted on nursing him through it. The Swami's care of the sick has always had a peculiar quality in it. Something seems to flow from the tips of his fingers which soothes and restores. Swami Brahmananda asked him very often to rub him when he was not well and, I was told, he would invariably give a little cry of protest when the Swami stopped. Swami Ramakrishnananda said to me one day: "Paramananda with his purity ought to be able to heal by a single touch," and I was able to tell him of several instances in which this had been verified.

Whatever service he renders he gives of himself with unstinted generosity. Another's need is reason enough to offer whatever he may have to meet it. One of the articles I carried back to India was a lovely flame-colored *chraddar*

or shawl. When Swami Ramakrishnananda saw it his face lighted up and he asked: "Do you know the story of that *chuddar*?" I answered that I did not, and he continued: "One chill rainy day I noticed that Paramananda was going about with nothing but a thin shirt over the upper part of his body. I had given him a piece of woolen cloth to keep him warm and I asked him where it was. He replied evasively, 'I am not cold.' A little later a boy from the Students' Home came in with the cloth on. I thought he had taken it heedlessly and I began to scold him, but he told me Paramananda had given it to him, saying he did not need it. I called Paramananda and asked him why he had done this. His answer was, 'He came in shivering, he had no shawl, so I gave him that one.' At once I wrote to Swami Premananda to send me the best *chuddar* that he could find in Calcutta, and this is what he sent."

Swami Vivekananda passed away on the 4th of July, 1902. His going cast a deep gloom over the hearts of the two Swamis and led them to withdraw into a still more indrawn meditative habit of life. This devout quietude continued until the end of the year, when it was broken by a visit from Sister Nivedita. She was on a lecture tour with a member of the Order and another companion; her heart also was sore with the sense of loss and she was glad to make a long pause among those with whom she felt kinship of sorrow. The new Swami had been at the Calcutta Monastery for such brief intervals that she had seen little of him. Now the closer daily contact called forth warm expressions of enthusiasm and affection. She would bring her work and sit beside him by the hour, plying him with questions about Swami Vivekananda,—what he had said and done when the young Swami first came to the Ramakrishna Mission. Also she asked him much about his own early life.

She found many points of resemblance between him and Swami Vivekananda and began to call him "Baby Swamiji." The term Swamiji when used alone always indicates Swami Vivekananda to members and friends of the Mission. Others also, especially Swami Ramakrishnananda, often spoke of this resemblance and among the gentlemen who came to the Monastery the young Swami was generally known as "Kunchu Vivekananda" (the little Vivekananda.)

Likeness to Swami Vivekananda implies another likeness,—to the statues of Buddha. When I was in India, I saw a small bronze statue of the Buddha, uncovered during recent excavations there, which I mistook for a statue of Swami Vivekananda; and when the young Swami accompanied Swami Ramakrishnananda to Ceylon, passers-by more than once stopped Swami Ramakrishnananda to inquire who the young Sannyasin could be who bore so striking a likeness to the famous Daibutzu figure of Buddha in the temple of Kamakura. Once also the young Swami was followed in Bangalore by two youths who believed him to be some super-earthly being because of his resemblance to a figure of Buddha they had in their house. Afterwards when Swami Ramakrishnananda related these incidents to Swami Brahmananda, Swami Brahmananda replied: "It is true, he is very like Buddha in appearance all except the big ears." It is an interesting coincidence that even as a little boy the Swami had an exceptionally profound reverence for the Lord Buddha, and "Buddha the Compassionate" has been one of his favorite themes for lectures since he began his public work.

Other guests followed Sister Nivedita at intervals; and later Swami Trigunatita, on his way to America, stopped at the Madras Monastery for a fortnight's visit. Swami Ramakrishnananda was away on a lecture tour at the time,

and the full burden of entertaining the honored guest fell on the younger Swami. He gave himself up with earnest zest to the unusual responsibility, expending all his energies in preparing savory dishes of great variety for the daily meal. Once when he brought to Swami Trigunatita an exceptionally delicious cooling drink, the Swami said to him: "What do you put into whatever you prepare to give it such a special flavor? Your devotion has certainly awakened in you the divine instinct so that all you do has a special fragrance." There was no bed for Swami Trigunatita, so the young Swami gave him his own. When Swami Trigunatita discovered this one night when he was retiring, he lay down on the floor and refused to take the cot. The young Swami threatened to put him on it by force, but as Swami Trigunatita weighed over two hundred pounds, everyone laughed, thinking he was jesting. Suddenly, however, he stooped, lifted the Swami and laid him on the bed to the amazement of all. When Swami Ramakrishnananda heard of this he showed no surprise, for he often said the young Swami was a remarkable combination of the gentleness and delicacy of a woman with the strength and firmness of a man.

Another visitor of a very different kind was brought to the Monastery from Adyar. He was an American member of the Theosophical Society who had come out to India to study. Something in the climate or different conditions of living affected his mind, he grew very morose and finally refused to touch food or drink. When all efforts to persuade him to eat were without avail, they took him to the Swamis, believing they might be able to help him. Swami Ramakrishnananda also failed to overcome his aversion to food, but when the young Swami offered him something, he took it without a word. Swami Ramakrish-

nananda seeing this asked the younger Swami, "What have you done to him?" and laughingly accused him of "making a magic." After that the young Swami brought him all his food. He remained some time at the Monastery and gradually recovered.

The younger Swami's own health began to break under the devitalizing heat of Madras. He lost all taste for food; and although Swami Ramakrishnananda himself went to the bazar and exhausted his ingenuity in trying to find something to tempt the waning appetite, the Swami grew weaker and thinner every day. A devoted friend hoping that a change might benefit him carried him off to Tanjore. There exists a tradition there that a very wise and holy sage, Agastya by name, has lived for many hundreds of years on the bank of the sacred river Kavary, which runs through Tanjore, coming daily to bathe in the river; and the belief prevails that the whole country round about is blessed by his illumined thought and life, though he keeps himself hidden from view. The Swami was eager to go to Tanjore and see for himself what was the ground for the tradition. During his entire visit he rose every morning at two, went to the river, and until three or after sat on the bank in meditative vigil, watching for the coming of the sage. One day he had the sense of a fleeting vision and he liked to believe that he had caught the flash and fragrance of Agastya's saintly presence.

He spent altogether three weeks at Tanjore. On his return another friend took him to the Nilgiri Hills and they passed some time at Ootacamond, the summer seat of the Madras Presidency's Government. While there the Swami formed a close friendship with a gentleman occupying a high position in the service of the Maharajah of Mysore. This gentleman already knew Swami Vivekananda and later

he became one of the most ardent supporters of the Ramakrishna Mission; but he himself told me that nothing had ever done more to deepen his longing for the religious life than the meeting with this pure, fresh young Sannyasin, so full of the spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion. Their friendship has continued and now they are spiritual brothers, for the gentleman has become a member of the Order. By a striking coincidence an Ashrama was established quite recently at Ootacamond, and this new Swami was put in charge of it.

(To be continued)

SWAMI'S TEACHING REACHES THE BLIND

Extract from letter of C. L. Olin

I wish you might have seen Helen Keller the day she came from New York to make her plea for care for the aged deaf-blind people of New England at the dinner that opened the campaign for funds. She came in the afternoon to rest for a few hours at our Guild, and had tea upstairs quietly with Miss Kennedy and me. It has always interested me to see how surely she walks, and how fearlessly, into any new surroundings. This time it brought to mind the lines she had written on the photograph of herself she had sent:

"One soft hand blinds our eyes,
The other leads us safe and slow:
O Love of God most wise!"

She passed through the strange hall and up two stairways by herself with her fingers touching the wall and banisters, and then explored her room with a look of delighted discovery as she touched each piece of furniture or found a doorway or window. Then she sat down to wait in perfect content for what was to happen next. . . .

Then we laid your book in her lap, and I wish I could

picture her as she sat there in the big chair reading aloud to us as she slipped her fingertips along the Braille lines. "Through the blessings of the Supreme, may our life be fruitful," and so on to "May we serve God alone with our whole heart and soul," where she stopped to say, "Ah, this book is my creed." (The book referred to is "The Way of Peace and Blessedness," by Swami Paramananda, recently put into Braille by the Clovernook Institute for the Blind.)

She was greatly interested in hearing the book had been made at Clovernook, as she had a friend there.

"Tell me about Mr. Swami who wrote this book," she said. She could not quite pronounce the syllables of your name from the Braille, but when she put her fingertips against my lips, she repeated it correctly the very first time. "What a beautiful name! What does it mean?" she asked.

I repeated your poem "Surrender" to her, Miss Thomson, her secretary, spelling it swiftly and smoothly into her curved hand as I gave it, and she said, "I love that. He is like Tagore, is he not?"

When tea came, she had to lay her "treasure" as she called it, aside. "But," she said, "I shall read it when I get into my berth on the train to-night." . . .

Just before she left for the train, we gave her some milk and fresh sponge cake, and with her little lunch before her she said, "Now tell me some more about Swami Paramananda." She approved the idea of having some of your poems done in Braille on cards.

Never have the envious become great; never have those who are free from envy been without greatness.—*South-Indian Saint*.

Shun idleness; it is the rust that attaches itself to the most brilliant metals.—*Voltaire*.

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

There are some things which cannot be adequately conveyed in a report. Of these was the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday at Ananda-Ashrama on February the twenty-fourth. Save for the verbal announcement at the preceding Sunday Service, no notice was sent out. In spite of this, however, a large number of devoted hearts assembled at the Ashrama, Tuesday afternoon, to do homage to one whose childlike purity, consummate wisdom, divine tolerance and transcendent vision helped to rekindle in modern India its ancient flame of faith. The Service was at three o'clock but long before that time friends began to arrive with their arms full of offerings, food and flowers. These last were used upon the altar and shone like stars along the great stone mantle, where stood Sri Ramakrishna's garlanded picture.

Were we to write down on this page every word that the Swami spoke that afternoon, the spirit which was breathed forth could never be written down. The unsullied beauty and holiness of Sri Ramakrishna's life seemed to flow from the Swami, filling his words to overflowing with the grace of God. There were few who did not feel tears very close and speech difficult when the Service ended. A living atmosphere was created under whose benign influence humility, selfishness, surrender were seen as the real treasures of life, the great realities of existence. One member voiced it all when she said: "I feel as if I had partaken of the Holy Sacrament". The Swami invited everyone to remain for refreshments which he had prepared with his own hands.

"When pure Spirit shines who sees it?

Few, yea, only a very few;

For not many have the seeing eye ——"

But for those few who could see that light even a little, Tuesday will ever remain as a sacred memory.

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"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tyndall.

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SONG OF ADORATION

By Swami Paramananda



AIL to Thee, Thou who comest at morn
with gentle raiment to open our
sleep-worn eyes!

Not in dazzling splendor, but with
soft, white light

Dost Thou soothe our mortal sight.

Hail to Thee, Thou who comest at morn
with fragrant breath,

Filling our mortal frame with vibrant life!

Hail to Thee, Thou who dost light in
our heart

The flame of all-consuming love!

Hail to Thee, Thou who dost rouse in
our soul

Adoration for all this, Thy creation!

In speechless thought I marvel at Thy
boundless blessing.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

The value of the figure one (1) may be raised by adding zeroes to it, but if the figure *one* be omitted, the zeroes of themselves have no value. Similarly, so long as the individual soul clings to the Supreme One, it has value—otherwise all of its efforts and works are in vain.—*Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna.*

He who knows himself, knows God.—*Saying of Mohammed.*

The soul is its own witness; the soul itself is its own refuge; offend not thy conscious soul, the supreme internal witness of man!—*Ordinances of Manu.*

Since the nature of the soul is divine, be assured that you will attain the Divine. Through the soul, by self-identification with the soul, you will ascend to the Eternal World. You need not seek for the one Self far from your self, nor is there in reality any barrier between yourself and That. To reach the Self, take as your guide the higher principle of the soul, which is in essence one with Divine Wisdom.—*Aenead.*

A pleasant life is theirs in the celestial realm. They have the Truth for mother, nurse, and nutriment; they see all things, not the things that are born and die, but those that have real being; and they see themselves in others.

For them, all things are transparent, and there is nothing dark or impenetrable; but every one is manifest to every one internally; and all things are manifest, for light is manifest to light. Every one has all things in himself, and sees all things in another, so that all things are everywhere, and all is all and each is all, and the glory is infinite.—*Plotinus.*

POWER OF THE SOUL*From Hermes Trismegistus*

All are in God but not as lying in a place. For place is both a body and immovable, and things that lie do not have motion.

Now things lie one way in the Bodiless, another way in being made manifest.

Think then of Him who doth contain them all; and think, than the Bodiless naught is more comprehensive, or swifter, or more potent, but it is the most comprehensive, the swiftest, and most potent of them all.

And thus think from thyself and bid thy soul go unto any land and there more quickly than thy bidding will it be. And bid it journey oceanwards; and there again immediately 'twill be, not as if passing on from place to place, but as if being there.

And bid it also mount to Heaven; and it will need no wings, nor will aught hinder it, nor fire of sun, nor ether, nor vortex-swirl, nor bodies of the other stars; but cutting through them all, it will soar up to the last body of them all. And shouldst thou will to break through this as well and contemplate what is beyond—if there be aught beyond the Cosmos, it is permitted thee.

Behold what power, what swiftness, thou dost have! And canst thou do all of these things and God not do them?

Then in this way know God; as having all things in Himself as thoughts, the whole Cosmos itself.

If then thou dost not make thyself like unto God, thou canst not know Him. For like is knowable to like alone. Make then thyself to grow to the same stature as the Greatness which transcends all measure; leap forth from everybody; transcend all time; become Eternity, and thus shalt thou know God.

THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

By Swami Paramananda

The philosophers call our senses so many doors and windows of the soul through which it reaches out and experiences the material world, both good and evil. The soul forms the habit of looking through certain avenues of experience, through certain definite and specific sense faculties; and some of the avenues which perhaps lead to higher, to greater understanding, are blocked; they become clogged. We know in our own house when a window is very much clouded, when it has been neglected for a long time, how difficult it is to see through it. Sometimes we may get an entirely distorted picture; a woman may look like a man, a figure may appear tremendously magnified, or the opposite. In the same way when some of our faculties are clogged or blocked through neglect or other causes, we are not able to see clearly and we doubt. It is a very sad outlook when we think that with all our desire to know, our desire to find happiness and abundance of life, we should turn away from the Source of supply.

A theme may be logical, true and based on the very highest, yet when we are not able to connect it with our own life, we say: "I cannot understand it, that is not my experience." Very true; it is true of all spiritual things, not only in regard to the laws of life, scientific and spiritual, but in relation to everything. Unless it is our own experience it avails very little. For instance, written words of the Bible, consolation that is promised, these words fall flat, unless they are related to our experience. When we are hungry, if some one comes and tells us: "Pray to God, He will give you food"; when we are stricken with disease or confronted with death, if some one says: "Fear not, your soul is immortal"; it may bring us tremendous consola-

tion if it is our own belief. If it is a conclusion drawn from our own experience, it will strike a spark within us which will enlighten our whole soul. If it is not related to our experience, it will create a jarring note; we shall feel provoked that any one dare say such a thing when we are in need, when we are in agony or pain.

The jarring note is not struck by any one from outside. No one has any power to strike a jarring note in our life. A person may try, but we hold the control of our destiny in our own hand. We have the power to maintain the right rhythm at all times, and that power is the power of understanding. Spiritual understanding is not monopolized by any religion or creed. It is the common heritage of mankind. It exists in knowledge. Either we have it consciously, or we have it not. Some people may not have it and yet they may pretend they have it; and that becomes a calamity. This is the calamity of many existing religions. Religion does not consist merely in going to church or reading a few passages from the Scriptures; unless we can live it, unless our life becomes our own product, born of our own soul and our own experience, it will not be productive. We may say, how can it be our own product? What have we to do with it? It is not that we have to give up everything we are doing or run away from our present situation. On the contrary, we must learn to do better the things we are doing; we must learn to meet our problems with a new sense of sanctity and with spiritual understanding.

We have within us the power to see spiritually as well as to see materially. Both avenues are open, but we are not always able to use our higher sense of perception. These faculties must be cultivated. A person forms the habit of being skeptical, doubting; no matter what is

brought before him, he tries to tear it to pieces; no matter who may come near him, his first thought is suspicion. He creates about him, within him, and all around him an atmosphere which is unwholesome for himself and for others. If we live in such an atmosphere to-day, and expect to find something contrary as our reward to-morrow, we are not rational. Life goes according to law. As we sow, so must we reap. It is very simple. If we abide by this simple principle, then there is nothing in heaven or earth that can rob us of our true heritage. If we think we can evade it, if we think we can bribe some one, we are very much mistaken. Whom are we going to bribe? The high intelligence that we possess within ourselves is not susceptible to such things. It has its sense of justness which is inherent, and that holds us to evil conditions or to good, whichever we create. We may escape from all the material laws. We may escape from others, we may go unnoticed; that is, when we have done something wrong, other people may forget or may not see it; but we do not escape, we cannot overlook ourselves. For that reason the highest spiritual cultivation begins from within. We do not do it out of fear, or out of compromise; we do it because a greater sense of truth has risen within us; and with that we gain power,—power over our life, power over our destiny, power to help. If we want to overcome our misfortunes and gain spiritual understanding, we must not hold an attitude of dissatisfaction, we must not have a scornful feeling towards ourselves or towards our fellow-beings or towards Providence.

We must go direct to the Cause. It is not through fear that we should seek consolation from religion. On the contrary, there is no fear where there is wisdom; there is no fear where there is love. When love and wisdom gov-

ern our life, we are removed from the error of fear, we become imbued with fearlessness. It is not because we have grown aggressive, but because we have gained a little power through knowledge, through higher conviction. When we know conclusively that we have an undying soul, there is not so much desire to accomplish everything at once, in a rush. That is one of the great misfortunes of life. People do not see more than this little span of existence. They feel that they must accomplish everything at once, and in their mad rush they do not have time to think of God; then they fall down and how difficult it is to wipe out wrong actions, their memory and reactions. When however we have this background, the knowledge that we have a soul, that we have an immortal heritage, that our life is divine, that it has come down from the divine Source, not only does it give us a sense of poise, of stability and calmness, of serenity, it also eliminates all selfish elements. Our wanting to do everything at once makes us in our haste unmindful whether we hurt or deprive some one else; but if we deprive others, it only deprives ourselves. The law holds us. That is the summary of life.

We cannot escape from our destiny, but we can conquer it. If our present life is the product of our past, then we can make our future what we want to make it by our right action and by right thinking. We can increase its power for good; also we can decrease it by allowing ourselves to be bound by material conditions and making ourselves feel that we are wholly subject to these conditions; in other words, by taking an entirely material point of view. This life is not a by-product like the things we mould with our hand, which have beginning and end. The soul is not that way. In order to know its nature, in order to find proper nourishment for it, to produce healthfulness and happiness

and all that is beneficent for it, we must be willing to go deep down within ourselves. An average person says the soul is full of mystery; it is darkness. It is darkness only for those who have allowed themselves to follow the path of darkness. Those who have entered the inner sanctuary with the spirit of light, they find life.

What we take with us, there we find its counterpart. Those who enter into this arena of life with faith find light; those who enter with doubt, despair and suspicion, they attract those elements. Their life is thwarted because of their own creation. The mind has the power to counteract; not only counteract, but definitely create something which smoothes our path. We are given again and again opportunities, that where we have blundered, we may not blunder again; that where we have failed, these failures may teach us how to stand up and do the right thing. This is the reason we are given opportunities during this life, and also even after this bodily life. It is a continuous existence, and we keep on living and growing and evolving and experiencing until we find our goal. This is our consolation.

We must take a bigger point of view. It does not make any difference what religion we belong to. Belonging to a religion does not mean signing our name to a doctrine or subscribing to a creed. It is deeper. It must reach our soul, and our soul must feel its response to the higher. It is knowing. And unless we know, no matter how much dogmatic belief we may have, we may fill our mind with all kinds of theories, it will be of very little avail to us when we are confronted with bigger difficulties. Therefore cultivation of a spiritual sense is cultivating within our own self a sense of Divine Presence, of Truth, of God, whatever the name we give Him. This is essential. We can be very much alone even though surrounded by many peo-

ple as long as we have not found our access to the House of God. As long as we leave its windows and the different avenues to it blocked, we mar our happiness, we endanger our safe journey. For that reason we must keep all these avenues cleansed and open. The body, our senses, all these faculties which are God-given, become a great power and a great comfort to us, if we cleanse them with pure thoughts, true aspirations, unselfish actions. When we do this we find that the happiness which we desire is not so far from our life; that the peace which we aspire for, is not in any distant place; it is already here, near us. It is only a question of knowing and feeling.

Nothing adds so much to this feeling as a sense of devotion. Devotion is not, as many people may suppose, something sanctimonious and sentimental. It is the true feeling of our being. Sometimes we do feel, sometimes circumstances compel us to feel deeply; and when we cultivate a sense of spiritual feeling, when we can truly have a sense of the Presence of Divinity within us and of a protecting hand, it becomes our safeguard, the safest guard we can have through this journey of life.

Let us lift our mind and heart that we may feel that great Presence within us and rejoice, finding our delight and rest in that great Presence which is our birthright.

PRAYER

Oh Thou Infinite Spirit of the universe,
Thou are our loving Mother and protecting Father;
Thou art our Brother, Friend and Companion;
Thou art all our Wealth and Wisdom;
Thou art our all in all.
Surround us with Thy tender love,
Give us Thy compassionate hand
And lead us ever in safety through this
journey of life.

Oh Thou Infinite, All-seeing Spirit of the universe,
Thou knowest our inmost thoughts and feelings
Free our hearts from all blemish of selfishness,
unkindness and unloveliness;
Fill it with Thy divine love and unfailing strength.
Thou art our Source and Sustenance;
Our Resting-Place and Abode of Joy.
Grant unto us, Thy little children, Thy loving protection
and enfold us ever in Thy perfect peace.

FINAL GOAL

From the Atma-Bod'h

The emancipated soul is that illumined person who throws off his former attributes and qualities, and becomes one with the true living happy Being, in like manner as the chrysalis becomes a butterfly.

Having crossed the sea of passion, and slain the evil spirits lust, hatred, jealousy, envy, etc., he is joined to tranquillity and rejoices in the Spirit.

Having renounced that pleasure which arises from external perishable objects, and enjoying spiritual delight, he is serene as the taper under cover and rejoices in his own being.

The Yogi, while dwelling in the body, is not affected by its properties; as the sky is not affected by what floats in it. Knowing all things, he remains unconcerned and moves free as the wind.

When attributes are subdued, the Yogi and all beings enter into the all-pervading Essence, as water mixes with water, ether with ether, fire with fire. He is one with God, after possessing whom, there is nothing to be possessed; after enjoying whose happiness there is no happiness to be desired; and after attaining the knowledge of whom, there is no knowledge to be obtained.

A LITTLE FLOWER OF THE WEST

By Sister Daya

This is the story of a little flower of God, and yet not the story. How can the reality of any life be conveyed in a few pages, or in words at all, and when it comes to the holy, who is qualified to speak? Therefore as much as possible we shall let this flower give of its own perfume.

Marie Françoise Therese Martin was born in France in the year 1873. Peculiarly blessed from her birth, she unfolded as it were, in the light of love. She lived in an atmosphere of love and she breathed forth the fragrance of love. Her parents were what in India would be called "household devotees", for their lives were consecrated to the service of God. Thus the home of Therese was no ordinary home. It radiated an inner joy, a simplicity, a peace, only found where faith burns with a living flame. For fifteen years Therese dwelt within this pure shelter, untouched by the world, then urged by an inborn vocation which swept aside all obstacles, she passed through its doors into the more austere protection of the Carmelite Convent of Lisieux. Her blooming was inside the convent walls and it was there, nine years later, that her petals fell before they had fairly opened. Only twenty-four years of life! But what is the fact of time in the records of the Timeless? That Therese was a Catholic of modern days, that her ideals were colored by the great traditions of the Roman Church are also facts of lesser import. Her holiness lay not in her belief but in her character,—in her selflessness, her purity, her devotion, and it is because of her essential nature that she sweetens countless lives to-day. The fragments that follow are taken at random from her life-story, "The History of the Springtime of a Little White Flower", written by her at the request of the Mother-Prioress of Lisieux,—and from certain letters and reminiscences.

"It is to you, dear Mother", she begins, "that I am about to confide the story of my soul. . . . If a little flower could speak, it seems to me that it would tell us quite simply all that God has done for it, without hiding any of its gifts . . . under pretext of humility. . . . The little flower that now tells her tale rejoices in having to publish the wholly undeserved favors bestowed upon her by Our Lord. * * * I understood," she states, "that if all the lowly flowers wished to be roses, nature would lose its springtide beauty. . . . And so it is in the world of souls, Our Lord's living garden. He has been pleased to create great Saints who may be compared to the lily or the rose, but he has also created lesser ones who must be content to be daisies or simple violets flowering at His feet, and whose mission it is to gladden His divine eyes when He deigns to look down on them. And the more gladly they do His Will the greater is their perfection."

Even as a tiny child the great Feasts of the Church drew the soul of Therese. Above all she loved the procession of the Blessed Sacrament. "What a joy it was," she cries, "to strew flowers in Gods path! But before scattering them on the ground I threw them high in the air and was never so happy as when I saw my rose leaves touch the sacred Monstrance." The day of her First Communion in her twelfth year, she describes as the most beautiful day of her life. "How perfectly I remember even the smallest details of those sacred hours," she writes, . . . "but I would not and I could not tell you all. Some things lose their fragrance when exposed to the air, and so, too, one's inmost thoughts cannot be translated into earthly words without instantly losing their deep and heavenly meaning." At the actual moment of communion she felt that "Therese had disappeared like a drop of water lost in the immensity of

the ocean; Jesus alone remained. . . . And then," she confesses, "my joy became so intense, so deep, that it could not be restrained; tears of happiness welled up and overflowed. My companions were astonished, and asked each other afterwards: 'Why did she cry? Had she anything on her conscience?' . . . And no one understood that all the joy of heaven had come down into one heart, and that this heart, exiled, weak and mortal as it was, could not contain it without tears."

The Profession of Therese at the Carmel fell on the Feast of the Nativity of Mary. How she rejoiced that it was "the *little* new-born Holy Virgin who presented her *little* flower to the *little* Jesus." The name that she took: "Soeur (Sister) Therese of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face," typified her life. At an earlier time she had offered herself to the Child Jesus to be His little plaything. "I told Him not to treat me like one of those precious toys which children only look at but dare not touch, but to treat me like a little ball of no value, that could be thrown on the ground, kicked about, pierced, left in a corner, or pressed to His heart, just as it might please Him. In a word, I wished to amuse the Holy Child and to let Him play with me as He fancied."

Always she was the "little Therese," seeking to win God by a child-like caress. Even spiritual dryness, her most constant cross, served but to increase her sense of "littleness." "In truth, I am no Saint," she admits, . . . "I ought not to rejoice in my dryness of soul, but rather attribute it to my want of fervour and fidelity. That I fall asleep so often during meditation . . . should distress me. Well I am not distressed. I reflect that little children are equally dear to their parents whether they are asleep or awake. * * * I have not the courage to look through books for beautiful prayers," she again confesses, "I only get a headache be-

cause of their number. . . . I do as children who have not learnt to read, . . . I simply tell Our Lord all that I want, and He always understands. With me, prayer is an uplifting of the heart; a glance towards heaven; a cry of gratitude and love, uttered equally in sorrow and in joy. In a word, it is something noble, supernatural, which expands my soul and unites it with God." At another time she said: "I cannot well see what more I shall have in heaven than I have now. I shall see God, it is true, but as to being with Him, I am that already even on earth." When someone complained of distractions during meditation, she replied: "I also have many, but as soon as I am aware of them, I pray for those people the thought of whom is diverting my attention. . . . I accept all for the love of God, even the wildest fancies that cross my mind."

Although by far the youngest member of the Carmel Community, her rare qualities of mind and heart won for her the position of Mistress of Novices, a title, however, which she never chose to bear. Instead of being elated at this honor she approached her task in utter humility. "God has special love for you since He entrusts souls to your care," said one of her novices, and Soeur Therese answered, "Rather He makes me your little handmaid. . . . Provided His Kingdom be established among souls, the instrument matters not. Besides, He has no need of any one. * * * Dear Mother," she writes, "I am the little brush that Jesus has chosen to paint His likeness in the souls you have confided to my care. . . . If an artist's canvas could but think or speak surely it would never complain of being touched or retouched by the brush, nor would it feel envious thereof, knowing that all its beauty is due to the artist alone." In more playful vein, she compares herself to a little bowl filled by God with good things. "All the kittens

come to eat from it, and they sometimes quarrel as to which shall have the largest share. But the Holy Child Jesus keeps a sharp watch. 'I am willing you should feed from my little bowl,' He says, 'but take heed lest you upset and break it.' In truth there is no great danger because I am already on the ground. Not so with Prioresses. Set as they are on tables, they run far more risk."

A novice, beset by a temptation, said to Therese: "This time I cannot surmount it." "Why seek to surmount it? Rather pass beneath. . . . It recalls a little incident of my childhood. One day a horse was standing in front of the garden gate preventing us from getting through. My companions talked to him and tried to make him move off, but while they were talking, I quietly slipped between his legs. Such is the advantage of remaining small." "Oh! when I think of all I have to acquire!" exclaimed one. At which, Therese: "Or rather to lose! . . . You want to climb the mountain whereas God wishes you to descend it. He is awaiting you in the fruitful valley of humility." One day she showed to a novice who was in tears that nothing made community life more trying than unevenness of temper. "You are indeed right," said her charge, "henceforward my tears will be for God alone." "Tears for God!" instantly replied her young Mistress, "that must not be. Far less to Him than to creatures ought you to show a mournful face. . . . Frankly this is not disinterested love. . . . It is for us to console Our Lord and not for Him to console us. . . . Our Lord loves the glad of heart, the children that greet Him with a smile. . . . The face is the mirror of the soul, and yours like that of a contented little child should always be calm and serene. * * * What benefit do we derive from defending ourselves?" she asks. Leave things as they are and say noth-

ing. * * * We must offer Jesus the flowers of little sacrifices."

The Mother Prioress writes of her: "It was with difficulty that her delicate stomach accustomed itself to the frugal fare of the Carmel. Her neighbor at table said that she had tried in vain to discover the dishes she preferred and the kitchen Sisters finding her so easy to please invariably served her with what was left." Therese throws light on this with delicious humour: "I imagine myself at Nazareth in the house of the Holy Family. If, for instance, I am served with anything pungent of taste . . . I offer it to St. Joseph; to our Blessed Lady I offer hot foods and ripe fruit, and to the Infant Jesus our feast-day fare, especially rice and preserves. Lastly when I am served a wretched dinner I say cheerfully: 'to-day, my little one, it is all for you.' * * * Words do not suffice!" she cries. "To be a true victim of love we must surrender ourselves entirely . . . Love will consume us only in the measure of our self-surrender." One day in the Choir as she was beginning the Way of the Cross she felt herself suddenly wounded by a dart of fire "so ardent," she writes, "that I thought I should die. . . . It seemed as though an invisible force plunged me wholly into fire. . . . But Oh! what fire! what sweetness! . . . I have had several transports of love, and one in particular during my noviciate, when I remained for a whole week far removed from this world". Her real creed was love. This shines forth. "You ask me for a method of attaining perfection. I know of Love—and Love only. Our hearts are made for this alone. * * * When a soul with childlike trust casts her faults into Love's all-devouring furnace, how shall they escape being utterly consumed?"

For many months before the end, the Little Flower

drooped upon her stem in pain. But no agony could turn her from her chosen path. "My little way," she called it. "And what is this 'little way'?" they asked. "It is the way of spiritual childhood, the way of trust and absolute self-surrender". It was not a new way as she had thought and stated. The feet of the holy have ever followed it. Another "little one", a flower of the East calls it the "Way of Peace and Blessedness". His words sum up the life of this little flower of the West: "God is too great to be confined in any theory or belief. The only place He can manifest fully is in the pure heart. I care not where the spiritual flower grows, whether in the East or in the West; it will have the same beauty and fragrance and give the same joy to whoever comes near it. So a spiritual being is the same whether in the East or in the West. He will radiate the same beauty and truth and holiness wherever he may be."

COMMUNION

By Julia P. Dabney

When that the heart, like a fair lotus cup
Shrouding the sacred core, itself unfolds
In tremulous intuitions, sending up
The unimagined incense that it holds,
All the whole being instinct seems with light,
A swift suffusion from the Infinite!

* * *

How sinks the world away! How fades the hour,
All limits in the illimitable lost!
While the swept spirit, kindled by a power
Supreme, surrenders to its uttermost;
And there remains no consciousness nor sense
Save of the measure of Omnipotence!

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(The introduction appeared in July, 1924. Subsequent chapters in successive numbers.)

VIII

DEPARTURE FOR AMERICA

The sojourn at Tanjore and in the hill country revived the Swami's strength but the heat of Madras again pulled it down; and Swami Ramakrishnananda, gravely solicitous over his condition, decided to take him back to Bengal. It was during this journey that an incident occurred which revealed Swami Ramakrishnananda's feeling about the Swami's future work. They occupied a compartment by themselves; and, as always in Indian railway carriages, there was a connecting washroom. The door of this caught in some way while Swami Ramakrishnananda was there, making him prisoner. Although of large and powerful build, all his attempts to release the door failed; and at last the Swami, outside in the compartment, determined to free him. With supernormal strength, which he always seems able to command in emergencies, he gave one resolute push, the door flew open with a sudden jerk and struck Swami Ramakrishnananda in the chest, bruising him quite badly. The Swami was grief-stricken to think he should have hurt him and reverted to it again and again. Swami Ramakrishnananda reiterated that he was not hurt. Finally, to make his denial more emphatic, he said with tender insistence: "You could not hurt any one; it is not in your nature. You have come to this world for the happiness of many and for the good of many."

He spoke to me more definitely in the same tenor on more than one occasion, when I was in Madras. I recall one especially. It had been a day of flaming heat. The sun seemed to burn its way through tiled roof and solid wooden

shutters. In the evening after *arati*, the vesper service of prayer, meditation and waving of light and incense in the Shrine, a gentleman, closely allied with the Monastery, sent his carriage to take us to the sea front for a breath of cool air. We drove up and down the Marina or ocean parkway for awhile, then we drew up by the curb to enjoy the fresh breeze a little longer; and Swami Ramakrishnananda talked at length of the Swami's work, speaking with frank praise of what he was doing. He referred once or twice to certain acts of the Swami's which had been misunderstood by some members of the Order, and he exclaimed as if summing up his conversation: "I have not a doubt in my mind, whatever Paramananda does he does as an instrument in Sri Ramakrishna's hand, and that it is Sri Guru Maharaj (the great Master) working through him. He is a pure clear channel for His divine power and follows His will always." Another day he said: "I firmly believe Paramananda belongs to the immediate group of Sri Ramakrishna's direct disciples and was brought here later in order to carry on the tradition longer." These words seem prophetic in the light of the Swami's subsequent achievement.

When the travellers reached Calcutta, expert advice about the Swami's health was sought immediately and they were told that there was nothing wrong; the young Swami was merely run down and in need of rest and nourishing food. It was, however, the rainy season when illness is rife in Bengal and he fell a prey to typhoid fever. His vitality was low, his power of resistance small, and there seemed little chance of saving him. When the danger was at its height, a strange experience came to him. His consciousness withdrew from outer surroundings into what seemed to be a continuous meditation. One day sights and sounds faded away completely. He had the sensation of passing out of

his body to the other side and feeling joy in the change; but Swami Premananda came and begged his life of Sri Ramakrishna, that he might return to work in the world, and he came back. Whether it was a vision or a dream or an actual experience, he was too ill to tell; but when he returned from it, he felt within him a new and persisting conviction that his life was to be utilized to some special end ordained by a higher Power. This impression was intensified subsequently by many other unusual experiences both at the hours of meditation and at other times.

It was significant that from now on people began to seek him out and ask to be taught by him. He was forced into the position of teacher even before he had fully regained his health. In Howrah, across the river from Calcutta, there lived an ardent householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. His wife also was a devout follower of the Master; one son had joined the Order; and they considered themselves peculiarly blessed whenever any member of the Ramakrishna Mission paid them a visit. It was to this home that Swami was sent by Swami Brahmananda to pass his convalescence. The President was deeply concerned for his welfare and eager to procure the best conditions for his complete restoration to health. The place also was not far distant from the Monastery and it was possible for him to watch over the convalescent; and as the Swami grew stronger, he could go back and forth at frequent intervals.

The house, a large and luxurious one, was the daily meeting place for a number of young men, drawn there by the eldest son. They were a pleasure-loving group, passing their time in smoking, card-playing and music. The sudden appearance of a Swami with the suggestion of austerity which his shaven head and orange cloth gave, put a check on their gayety. The Swami realized they were ill

at ease with him and tried to break down the barrier they felt, even offering to play cards with them. This won him a place in the group and when they found he played cards better than they, winning constantly, they tried less to avoid him. He passed every evening with them and his new friends fell in the way of asking him questions about the religious life and the Scriptures, for interest in spiritual things is never wholly absent from the Indo-Aryan mind. In response the Swami related to them stories from the Sanskrit Sacred Writings. One night he told them the life of Lord Gouranga, a great divine manifestation who lived in India at the time of Luther, and the group listened with rapt attention.

Every evening cards were laid aside for a time and there was an ever-lengthening talk on some holy theme. The interest grew more and more keen, till at last one of the group more deeply touched than the others, exclaimed: "Why waste our time on cards? We cannot always have the Swami with us. Let us make the best of our opportunity." After that, they would hurry home from their offices in Calcutta declaring they had looked forward the whole day to the evening's talk, and for nearly a month the card party was transformed into a class for Scriptural study. The head of the house joined the class and said to the Swami again and again in amazement: "What have you done to these boys? You have succeeded in doing in a few days what I have been trying to do for years. You must certainly be full of electricity (meaning magnetism)."

From Howrah the Swami went back to the Monastery. Then a letter from his brother urging him to come home and remain until his health was fully restored led him once more to his native village. When he returned to the Monastery again, he was strong enough to take his place in the

daily routine. During this time following his recovery more than one test came to him. One day an older Swami approached him and began to rebuke him harshly for something he had not done. The young Swami kept silent and the older Swami grew sterner in his words; still the young Swami said nothing. At last the older Swami exclaimed sharply: "What is the matter with you? Are you deaf and dumb that you do not speak?" In the evening when the younger Swami was washing the dust from his feet before going to the Shrine, the older Swami came to him again and spoke with the greatest tenderness, saying he knew all the time he was not at fault, but he wished to test his endurance. Also in Madras, Swami Ramakrishnananda once scolded him for something he had not done. It was the only time he ever rebuked him. The younger Swami offered no justification. When Swami Ramakrishnananda discovered his error he was so distressed over it that he scolded the Swami again for his silence.

Not long after his return from his native village the Swami went again to Madras and the old life was resumed. But a new element had entered into it. Swami Ramakrishnananda now talked frequently of the work that lay before the young Swami and he said more than once that his work would be in the West. The Swami also was conscious of a growing belief that his field of work would be in the Occident, but he did not wish to leave India until he had seen all parts of it. The opportunity to do this presented itself unexpectedly. A member of the Order was returning from the West, the Swami accompanied Swami Ramakrishnananda to Colombo to meet him. They were entertained at various places in Ceylon, after which they journeyed north by slow stages. Everywhere they were received with great enthusiasm and honor. While I was in Bangalore, I

heard much of their visit there. For ten days they were guests of the Maharajah of Mysore. His father, when Maharajah, had done much towards making it possible for Swami Vivekananda to attend the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, and the son was eager to keep up the tradition by paying worthy homage to Brothers of the great Swami.

They were given a royal welcome. Triumphant arches festooned with green garlands and flowers were erected along the way by which they were to pass. High officials in the Prince's service met them at the railroad station, they were driven in a State carriage to a bungalow in the royal park set apart for their use, and special officials were appointed to look after their needs and comfort. Meetings were arranged and the older Swamis delivered lectures to audiences of a thousand or more. They were also entertained by various Societies. Before the visit was over the Government presented the Mission with a tract of land adjoining the extensive grounds of an ancient cave Temple on the outskirts of the city, and the corner stone of a new Monastery was laid. There was already a branch of the Ramakrishna Mission not far off under the direction of Swami Atmananda, but the work occupied rented quarters and the Government's donation gave the promise of a permanent home for it. The laying of the corner stone was carried out with elaborate ceremony. The Dewan (prime minister) and many of the most important officials of the Maharajah's service were present and great enthusiasm was manifest.

The Swami watched all these festivities as a quiet witness. In the various group pictures taken at the time, he sits garlanded like the others, but always with a smile on his face, as of one who is assisting at an amusing play. Being the youngest of the visiting Swamis, he kept himself in the

background; but many at Bangalore spoke to me of his charm and deep spirituality. The real trend of his mind is shown by an incident related to me by a physician at Bangalore, a man of genuine religious zeal. One afternoon the Swami felt the need of rest and preferred to stay quietly at home. The doctor asked to remain with him. After talking for a while, the Swami began to sing holy songs. In the middle of one of them, the physician told me, he passed into a higher state of consciousness and continued there for some time. When he returned, his face, the doctor said, was shining with a light such as he had never seen on any other face; but the Swami went on singing without a word.

From Bangalore, the Swamis proceeded through Puri to Calcutta; thence to Benares, Agra, Allahabad, Almora, stopping in Rajputana as guests of a native ruler, then on to Ahmedabad and Bombay. Swami Ramakrishnananda had left them at Calcutta. The Swami had seen India and as few see it—India in festal garb, garlanded and gay with song and music; for everywhere they had been welcomed with acclaim. Now he was ready to point his course westward. The member of the Mission with whom he was travelling was returning to America. He sailed with him on November, the tenth, from Bombay by a P. & O. steamer for England. After two weeks in London they continued their journey across the Atlantic and reached land in time to hear the Christmas chimes ring out from the belfries of New York.

(To be continued)

Let us turn to God with an ardent desire and activity, that God may be honored and glorified by the annihilation of our selfhood and all that we are able to do. May all men become enlightened and come to a knowledge of the Truth.
—*Ruysbroeck.*

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

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Message of the East



MAY, 1925

POISE and EFFICIENCY

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"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tyndall.

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POISE AND EFFICIENCY

Lecture by Swami Paramananda



IT IS not through chance that a soul is turbulent; it is also not through chance that we see some one who exhibits a sacred sense of poise and unshakable sanctity. Poise comes only when our lives have blended with Truth and we cannot blend our life with Truth accidentally. It springs from certain qualities in our soul, and these qualities we do not earn when we live casually and carelessly. They must be cultivated. Every hour of life is giving to us something to foster these qualities or to hinder them. There are thoughts which, as soon as they rise in our mind, make us feel better; they inspire us, they rouse our spirit, they open a new vista before our mind, and thus we become bigger. Also there are thoughts which make us feel small. We may not realize that we are feeling this smallness, but every one who contacts us feels it. We become suffocated in our own body because of our thoughts; they leave no room for the soul's expansion. We already have a narrow enough sphere; but we make it narrower through petty thoughts, small ideas, hateful attitude, and through anger and impatience.

Poise is a very wonderful attribute of the soul. I cannot imagine a man rising to any great height, to any great

thing which comes when we want what belongs to others or when we desire something better than others. Whenever we indulge in selfish instincts and petty thoughts, they always arise from that one central point, "I" and "mine." A man of spiritual experience drops these altogether for the good of his own self and the good of humanity. There is no great soul who ever strikes a discordant selfish note, or tries to seek victory through slaughter and annihilation of his enemies. He seeks by other means to reach his end. He conquers himself first. He first becomes the master of himself; and after finding his peace within, he gives a calm atmosphere to the world. Picture the image of Buddha, what does it represent? A serenity, a calm which comes to the soul only when it has transcended the realm of selfishness and self-seeking. Picture the life of Christ. In the midst of all opposition and what the world calls agony it was centred in something that was unshakable.

You may wonder why this serene poise cannot be distributed like a patent medicine, when people need it so much. We all know that it is necessary for our body, our mind and our nervous system; that each one of us would be a better person if we could maintain our inner peace and calm. But it is not anything that can be imposed from outside. It is something we must all earn. There are thoughts we can hold in our mind which will instantly bring a sense of relaxation, a sense of majesty within our soul. The body in spite of itself will respond and become pliable. Instead of being tense and rigid, even to the breaking point, it will become flexible; because it always yields to thought. That is the reason why sometimes we see a person exhibiting most wonderful beauty, very different from ordinary beauty. It is not the result of polishing the body or touching up by artificial means; it is a loveliness that rises from

the inner instinct of man. And wherefrom does it come? It comes from the depths within. As soon as we touch that inner depth, we are incapable of doing anything that is ignoble sordid or unpleasing to our higher instinct. This is the secret. It is not by any artificial method that it comes. There may be many rules and exercises and affirmations that we may repeat; but it is the quality of the soul which gives us that wonderful, most coveted beauty.

One of the mystics tells us that every human life should try to imitate the example of the tree or the example of mother earth. We plough deep into the earth, yet it continues to hold us up. A still better example is given by the tree. A person cuts its branches, yet it continues to give him shade and shelter. These are symbolic illustrations of life. If we think of these and try to understand their spiritual significance, we shall cease to be impatient or fretful. We are always complaining because some one else has done us an injury or robbed us of our happiness. No one else can rob us of our happiness, we rob ourselves. Suppose some one calls us by unkind names or uses harsh expression, or even tries to thwart us deliberately, yet it cannot touch us unless we make ourselves vulnerable through our own attitude or action. The people who do not entertain unkind feelings, harmful thoughts, unloving attitude, no one can harm them. That is the greatest safeguard we can have. But this requires great calmness of spirit. The small man lives on the surface. Every word gives him a jarring note. Sometimes elation lifts him up to the sky, the next moment he falls into depths of despondency. The man of larger vision goes deeper into life and he remains poised.

Tranquillity and poise give us certain qualities which make our life more fruitful. If we think calmly and deeply,

we can act profoundly and efficiently. But to-day in our modern life we altogether disregard this. A man believes he can spend his whole night in worry, calculation and scheming; then get up in the morning and really accomplish something. He needs freshness of spirit. His body needs re-strengthening; his mind must have the stimulation of inspiration, and these do not come to a soul that is indifferent to higher laws. People want happiness; people want all the beautiful things that make life complete; but these must be acquired through intelligent effort. It is not that we need to sacrifice or make ourselves martyrs. All the efforts that we are making now, all the energy that we are expending, perhaps in misdirected ways: we must direct these through proper channels and they will bring us rich fruition. This, however, requires calmness of spirit.

The most beautiful illustration that any one has ever given is the picture of a body of still water. The surface of water which is absolutely calm, how accurately it gives every image; but when it is agitated, not only does it not give a clear picture, it distorts. If a clear body of water can do so much, how much more a calm spirit will give to man. Yet these things we neglect. We say it is all right, we can go through the world and do our part,—we can work with our hands even though our mind is stirred up. We cannot neglect the most vital factor in our life. Whether any one else has offended us or tried to hurt us is not the question. The thing is, we can never disturb our own balance and benefit by it. We harm ourselves more than any one else, whenever we lack dignity, whenever we lose our poise. Even when troubles and disturbances come from all angles, what we need most is not to run for help from outside, but to keep a calm spirit.

It is through that, we learn to overcome evil. If we

grow nervous, we accomplish nothing. You may say: Some people are born with nervous tendency, with unsettled spirit, and it is natural for them to be thus. That is a tremendous illusion. We are not born with unsettled spirit; and we are not so weak that we cannot cure it, even if we think we are born with it. There is within us a Spirit which is always poised and calm; and when we find our contact with that source of perfect peace, we can cure all our ills. Form the habit of giving yourself a little opportunity, find a chance to connect yourself with that reservoir of life. It may sound visionary and vague and fictitious, but there is within the soul of man a real and inexhaustible supply. When he fails to draw from that supply and runs after outer things, although he may have a passionate longing for fulfillment, he will find only shadows.

When we contact our inner life and realize the true quality of our soul, something happens to us. A person who is fretful, who is nervous and irritable, suddenly becomes transformed; because he cannot contact a bigger thing without being transformed. That is the sum total of life. It is not by running after the pleasures of the world that we find satisfaction. All our experiences should teach us this one great lesson, to turn within. As we learn to turn within and more within, we find a sense of security and safety, and this is the source of all true poise and peace.

O friend, never strike sail to a fear. Come into port greatly, or sail with God the seas. Not in vain you live, for every passing eye is cheered and refined by the vision.—*Emerson.*

Give us to awake with smiles, give us to labour smiling. As the sun lightens the world, so let our loving-kindness make bright this house of our habitation.—*R. L. Stevenson.*

HIGHER CHOICE*By Marcus Aurelius*

Never value anything as profitable to thyself which shall compel thee to break thy promise, to lose thy self-respect, to hate any man, to suspect, to curse, to act the hypocrite, to desire anything which needs walls and curtains; for he who has preferred to everything else his own intelligence and his inner guide acts no tragic part, does not groan, will not need either solitude or much company; and what is chief of all, he will live without either pursuing or flying from death. Whether for a longer or a shorter time he shall have the soul enclosed in the body, he cares not at all.

In the mind of one who is chastened and purified thou wilt find no corruption, nor impurity, nor any sore skinned over. Nor is his life incomplete when fate overtakes him, as one may say of an actor who leaves the stage before ending and finishing the play. Besides, there is in him nothing servile, nor affected, nor too closely bound to other things, nor yet detached from other things, nothing worthy of blame, nothing which seeks a hiding-place.

If thou findest in human life anything better than justice, truth, temperance, fortitude, in a word anything better than thy own mind's satisfaction in the things which it enables thee to do according to right reason, and in the condition that is assigned to thee without thy own choice: if, I say, thou seest anything better than this, turn to it with all thy soul and enjoy the Deity planted in thee, which has subjected to itself all thy appetites, and carefully examines all impressions; and, as Socrates said, has detached itself from the persuasions of sense and has submitted itself to the gods and care for mankind. It is not right that anything of any other kind, such as praise, or power, or enjoyment of pleasure, should come into competition with that which is rationally and practically good.

HOLD FAST TO THY COMPASS

By Swami Paramananda

Sail thy vessel on,—
Steady, friend, steadily sail along.
Water may be rough
Or water may be smooth;
But ever hold fast to thy compass.
The sky may smile
Or the sky may frown—
Hold fast to thy compass.
Wind may roar
Or wind may be still;
But hold fast, hold fast to thy compass
and sail thy vessel on.
Steady, friend, steadily sail along.

DISCRIMINATION AND SURRENDER

From Conversations of Swami Turiyananda

As a bird flies to the sky with its two wings, so we must have the two wings of discrimination and renunciation to fly to the heights of liberation. Spiritual instructions make a lasting impression on the mind that is possessed of discrimination and renunciation, and when there is a lack of these the impression produced is proportionately small. If one has real discrimination and renunciation, one is safe. A man runs after water in a mirage only so long as he mistakes the mirage for real water. Once the delusion is broken, nobody goes to a mirage for water. The truth about it is that he only escapes whom the Mother Herself holds by the hand.

“Everything depends on Thy will, Mother, Thou actest as Thou pleasest.” If we are submissive to Her, She never fails to protect us. The more time passes, the more this idea

appeals to me. "Good and evil—both come from Thee, O Mother. Through Thy will all things come to pass. Thou makest the lame to scale mountains and the elephant to stick in a quagmire." There is a relief in the thought that behind all this there is a Power which guides everything. But the rationalists will not admit this view. They say: "Can an effect be produced without a cause?" And the other party replies: "He is the Cause of cause itself."

In my boyhood, when I saw a puppet-show and heard a puppet scream, I at once thought that it actually made that sound. The puppets seemed to move of their own accord. But later on I was disillusioned to find that some one pulled the wires from behind the scene.

The best servant is he who acts reading his master's mind; he who merely obeys his master's command is the mediocre servant; and the worst servant is he who gets the order but neglects to carry it out. It is very difficult to be a disciple. Have you heard the story of a man who wanted to be a disciple? He went to a Guru (spiritual teacher) and said: "Sir, make me a disciple." The Guru replied: "Will you be able to be one? A disciple has to bring water, fetch wood, and serve the teacher. Will you be able to do all this?" Then the man said, "And what has the Guru to do?" The teacher, smiling, replied: "Not much to speak of. He sits at ease and now and then gives a little instruction. That's all." Then the man said: "If you think it difficult to make me a disciple, why don't you make me a teacher?"

We must decide on a particular course and devote our whole life to it. We must make ourselves ready. Before taking up any work, make yourself fit. Because Krishna-murti drives a motor car, must I try to do the same? It would be foolish. But it is not an altogether impossible

feat. If one watches how he does it and makes one's self gradually fit, then one can do it, as Gobar is doing. Most people do not know their own strength.

Books on Yoga say that all power is in us. We must, however, learn to control the mind through proper discipline, then only will this power be manifest. For the accumulation of spiritual power absolute continence is needed. From continence comes strength. Meditation also is a great help. When the mind is withdrawn from all other objects except one and fixed on that, then the succession of similar impressions on that object is called meditation. As Swami Vivekananda used to say, "Pinning the mind to some particular object like a lump of dough is called concentration." Why do not all have concentration? Because they do not fulfill the condition for it, absolute continence. This is the source of strength. What can you expect of one who lacks this strength? The long and short of it is that one must have full self-control. The Gita says—"In my opinion, spiritual practice is impossible for one who has not self-control. But one who has controlled his senses may, if he tries, attain it by adopting the proper means."

People follow their own whims and fail to get good results. The Scriptures are there, but they do not turn to them. Nor will they listen to the teacher. In the end they become unfit for spiritual practice. One who is moderate in food and pastime, who is moderately engaged in work, and who divides his time proportionately between sleep and wakefulness,—such a man finds an end to all miseries.

If it be my lot to crawl, I will crawl contentedly; if to fly, I will fly with alacrity, but as long as I can avoid it, I will never be unhappy.—*Sydney Smith.*

SPIRITUAL MAXIMS

St. John of the Cross

(A Spanish Carmelite Monk and close associate of St. Theresa. 16th Century.)

Do not despise others because as it seems to you they do not possess the virtues you thought they had. They may be pleasing to God for other reasons which you cannot discover.

Never excuse yourself. Listen calmly to the reprimand and consider it to come from God.

Make neither much nor little of him who may be against you, and strive always to please God. Pray that His will may be done, and love Him much, for it is His due.

Love to be unknown to yourself and others; never regard the good nor the evil of others.

The communications which come really from God have this property, that they humble and exalt the soul at the same time, for in the way of the Spirit to descend is to ascend, and to ascend is to descend.

When God communicates His gifts and graces to the soul, He excites in it a repugnance to accept honours and distinctions; but in the way of humility and self-abasement, He gives it ease and readiness.

If you wish devotion to be born in your heart, the love of God to grow, together with the desire for divine things, cleanse your soul from every desire and self-seeking, so that nothing of the kind remains with you. For as a sick man, freed from the evil humours which troubled him, feels instantly returning health and a taste for his food, so shall you recover your health in God if you rid yourself of your spiritual disorders: and if this be not done, whatever you may do, you will make no progress.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(The introduction appeared in July, 1924. Subsequent chapters in successive numbers.)

IX

BEGINNINGS OF THE WORK IN BOSTON

The Swami's first Christmas was spent in New York, also the second. The third was celebrated in Mrs. Ole Bull's house in Cambridge. Sister Nivedita and Sir J. C. Bose, the famous botanist, with Lady Bose were also there; and Sister Nivedita arranged a Christmas Eve Service in the truly eclectic inclusive spirit of Vedanta. Holy Ganges water stood in a porcelain shell held by a Christian angel; the Swami, who conducted the Service and gave the final prayer, chanted Vedic texts in Sanskrit and sang Bengalee hymns to the Divine Mother. Other guests sang carols of Jesus and Mary; Nivedita herself read the narrative of the Nativity as given in St. Luke; and at the close she requested the Swami to bless all present with the Ganges water that she herself had carried all the way from India. But this Service was not the chief motive of the visit to Cambridge. In a letter of December 8th, 1908, written to me in India, we read: "This is just a line to tell you I am going to Boston and I leave New York on Friday. Pray to the Mother that this new career which I am undertaking may be Her own work. May I feel that alone."

With Mrs. Bull's invitation for the holiday season she had sent an urgent request that the Swami come prepared to remain permanently and start a Centre in Boston. Remembering a chance remark of Swami Vivekananda that Boston was the most difficult and the most worth while place in America, he felt favorably inclined towards the proposal. His decision, however, was somewhat shaken when he discussed the matter with Mrs. Bull and Sister Nivedita.

Anxious to sponsor the new work, they had mapped out a detailed and rigid plan for it in which politics were mingled with religion. To move by human calculation was totally alien to the Swami's habit of life. He knew but one Guide, the unfailing, all-wise Power speaking in the silence of his soul; and he had always gone forward spontaneously and planlessly, attentive only to That. Any other method, he felt confident, would hamper his free action and predestine the new undertaking to failure. He determined, therefore, to set out independently and look to God alone. "I will begin the work in strength, not in weakness," he writes, in another letter. "I will try my best to do it; and if help does not come from anywhere, I will try to be contented, thinking it is the Mother's will."

The Swami was unfamiliar with Boston, but he knew some Hindu students and he determined to join them. They were living in a shabby lodging-house in Appleton Street. The place was unclean; the bathroom, used by many people, was ill-kept; and the only accommodation available was a cot in the public parlor. He left his trunk at the express office, put aside his usual traditions of living and met the situation with cheerful courage. The next morning he began a search for more suitable quarters. At the end of three days he was able to move into an inexpensive lodging in St. Botolph Street. It was clean and decent, but far from comfortable, and the months spent there were months of real hardship.

The house was not sufficiently heated and sometimes he had to break the ice in his water pitcher before he could wash in the morning. He ate in cheap restaurants and not infrequently, when he did not find one where he chanced to be, he went dinnerless or supperless to a class or lecture engagement. His passing comment in a letter to me in India

at this time was: "As you see, I am working in Boston—working for a new Centre. You know how hard it is to build up something in the midst of strange people, and one must go through certain discomforts and hardships." Austere simplicity was not alien to his habitual manner of life, for whenever he is left free to shape his mode of living, he always shows himself indifferent to physical comforts. He bore with cheerful fortitude whatever came to him in his new life; but it put a great strain on his body.

Now and then his letters contained amusing incidents in his daily round. The humor of them, however, was lost on Swami Ramakrishnananda. They only made him uneasy for the Swami's welfare. When he heard that he was making a meal on "one egg and buttered toast," called across the half partition of a dairy lunch, he grew gravely solicitous and said to me: "Write to Paramananda that he must eat enough. If he lacks for money we will send it from here." This gave me a new glimpse of the warmth of his love for the Swami, for the Monastery at Mylapore was none too prosperous at that time, and ampler meals in Boston would mean poorer ones in Madras. The Swami on his side was equally concerned for Swami Ramakrishnananda's well-being and out of the little he had, through unremitting denial, he succeeded in saving a generous sum badly needed for building repairs at the Madras Monastery.

Lack of ease in his daily life, however, was a matter of small concern to the Swami. He was eager to be at work. But how and where to begin? He had brought with him from New York a letter of introduction to a lady living on Commonwealth Avenue. When he presented it, he found that a death had just occurred in the family, so he withdrew at once, merely leaving the letter with his card. A few days later he received a cordial invitation from the lady

to lunch with her. She was an ardent Swedenborgian and a large class for the study of Swedenborg's writings met almost daily at her house. She requested the Swami to remain for the afternoon and address the Class. Then he was urged to return and give another talk on the following morning.

After this second talk a member of the Class, who lived not far away near the Charles River embankment, asked if he would speak in her home. She was leaving town and Wednesday was the only available day. As it was then Monday, it did not seem possible in two days to gather together a large number; but forty-five responded, many of them being prominent people of Boston. The outcome of the meeting was significant. The Swami's simple and direct way of giving his message created an immediate and deep impression; a regular class for the study of concentration and meditation was formed and many joined. A lady in Waltham organized another class; a series of drawing-room lectures was arranged at a delightful home in Milton, a suburb of Boston; he was also invited to lecture at the Public Library in Lynn; and soon his time was so filled that he sometimes had three meetings in one day and often two.

On his own initiative he engaged a hall on Huntington Avenue and announced a series of Sunday afternoon lectures. The hall seated about two hundred; it was full the first Sunday and people were most hearty in their enthusiasm. Mrs. Bull was there and as she grasped the Swami's hand warmly after the lecture, her appreciative remark was: "You have an unusually happy way of presenting the teaching. Another might say the same thing, yet he would antagonize." The basic unifying note sounding through all the Swami's teaching now, sounded then too; and she had caught its ring.

There was a break in his Boston activities at the beginning of March. He was asked by the New York Vedanta Society to come there and conduct the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday; but before he left, an effort was made to create an organized Centre in Boston. A meeting was called after the final Sunday lecture before his going, and there was much discussion of officers and ways and means. While he was gone, those who had started this new departure, changed the hall for the public meetings and engaged from another Society the use of two rooms for the Classes and the sale of literature. The Swami always felt that this gave the new work a perceptible check. The attempt to organize was premature and contrary to his normal method. It has always been his custom to let his work outgrow itself and demand new and expanded conditions by its inherent need. He never forces growth. He lets the petals of the blossom of his effort drop off through the swelling of the fruit. His course has been like the slow upward push of a long-lived tree. That is why in all his work there has been no halting or falling back, no boisterous glory and also no failure or defeat; but a gentle, unswerving, continuous going forward to the highest ends with undaunted steadfastness. The results visible to-day are too obvious to require definition.

It took some weeks to regain the lost momentum caused by the visit to New York and the change of place for the Sunday lecture. When the season closed, however, the Swami felt fully justified in continuing his work another season. The struggle to establish it had not been a light one. The bodily hardships formed only a small part of the difficulties encountered. Swami Ramakrishnananda followed the Swami's progress with the tenderest interest. Once when the weekly mail brought word of the happy solution of

a perplexing problem, he exclaimed with triumphant satisfaction: "Now the boy has won his spurs," and another day when he learned that a trying situation had been overcome, he said to me: "There is no doubt that Paramananda was born with realization. Otherwise he could not remain so steady under all circumstances."

The next summer was passed at the pleasant home in Milton where he had given the course of drawing-room lectures in the early spring. His hostess had come one day near the middle of May and carried him off from his lodging for a fortnight's visit. The first fortnight stretched into a second, then a third and fourth, until the summer was over and he had not gone anywhere, except once or twice to New York or Greenacre for brief periods. He was even dissuaded from a contemplated visit to England. His hostess was reluctant to let him go, feeling the blessing of so rare a guest, who with his youthful gayety and gentle wisdom had brought new freshness of life into her home. It had always had for her the sanctity of a sanctuary and the Swami's presence seemed a new consecration.

Often he was up and out at six in the morning, singing his way through the tangle of phlox and poppies in a lovely garden lying in a little hollow below the terrace, with a tiny lake beneath tall trees not far away. Now and then he found his hostess there before him, scraping the grass from flower-edged paths or pulling weeds from over-grown beds; and they would talk together, sometimes playfully, sometimes of graver things. Then there were long philosophic discussions on the curved seat beside the trickling fountain outside the open-air dining room; or they would sit on the terrace in the moonlight and the Swami would tell them of life in India. They also read much aloud, especially in the evening. His hostess however was not

selfish with her unusual guest. She sought to share him in various ways. A close friend was invited to spend the whole summer with them, and many others were asked for luncheon, dinner, tea, and for breakfast even. Out of these numerous meetings came a few vital contacts, made with people who penetrated beneath the outer charm of the Swami's winning personality to the deeper inner charm which gave the shining light in his eyes, the radiance to his smile, the serenity and gentleness to his manner. They sensed he had a lofty message and they asked for it. Among these was a gentleman of Milton who was shut away from active life by bodily illness. The wife had been strongly attracted to the Swami and had asked him to come to see her husband. The Swami went and made a delightful friend. He found the gentleman deeply interested in the Upanishads and much discouraged over the poor translation of them he had at hand. He begged the Swami to translate them and write a commentary. It was this friendly suggestion which led to the Swami's subsequent translation of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita.

This summer at Milton was followed by others, and it was interesting to watch the gradual transformation of the house through the Swami's subtle silent influence, from an acknowledged centre of social and intellectual activity to a quiet forest hermitage, not unlike the woodland retreats of ancient India. Although the house was not isolated, it was so placed in the property, and the grounds were so laid out and planted that it gave the sense of great remoteness and seclusion. The rooms were crowded with pictures, ornaments, and old embroideries, collected during frequent journeyings in Europe. The second summer everything of secondary artistic value was put away, leaving spaces in which to enjoy more fully what remained. Entertainments

were reduced to a minimum, and only those were invited to the house who were in sympathy with the new order of things.

The third summer all servants were given up, to create a freer atmosphere for meditation and study, and the members of the community family divided the labor of the household. Each one took care of his or her own room; some washed dishes, others the pots and pans; and the hostess herself did the cooking. We shelled peas or peeled carrots on the verandah, while the Swami expounded the Upanishads, or explained the Bible, giving to Christ's teachings the deeper interpretation of an Oriental. These informal hours proved the seed of an interesting course of lectures on "The Bible in the Light of Vedanta" delivered at the Centre in Boston the following winter. We swept and dusted, weeded and sewed; then when the morning's work and study were done, we played croquet or other games on the lawn in the little valley below, with lemonade under the trees to quench the thirst of both victor and vanquished. Swami's side was invariably victorious. To be his opponent meant sure defeat. An artist who joined the family the third summer grew so grimly determined to win at least one set of tennis that he used to go elsewhere to practise, coming back each time expecting success; but he always lost the set, although occasionally he won a game. He made an important addition to our life, for he had a remarkable gift for improvising on the piano, and our conversation in the evening had frequent melodious interludes of music.

Sometimes he played at the evening Service, but more often it was the hostess herself; for the hour of sunset was an hour of prayer with us always. We had made a lovely Chapel in the studio on the upper floor. Swami is seldom

anywhere for long without creating a place for worship. This one was beautiful with church embroideries and hangings; an altar stood at one end, lovely and fragrant with flowers from the garden; a temple lamp threw a ruddy glow over everything; and when the evening hymn sounded out from the little organ brought from the music room we seemed very far away from the pains and distresses of the world and very near to the heart of God.

People began to envy our happy simple life, with its wholesome mingling of work, play and prayer. Now and then some one was asked to make a part of the family for a week or two, and gain a new impetus from the spiritual lesson which the Swami's daily living never fails to give. Occasionally there were two or three such guests, but we were seldom more than six. The house provided an ideal setting for the Swami and his teaching and became a second home for the Boston work as it gradually took form. It was once more an organized centre, now, not of social, but of spiritual activity; and the one who presided over it has been ever since one of the Swami's ablest assistants and one of his staunchest friends.

(To be continued)

THE VEDANTA CENTRE OF BOSTON

During Swami Paramananda's prolonged absences at Ananda-Ashrama, the activities of the Vedanta Centre of Boston have been carried on by the members with ever increasing devotion. Easter Sunday Shrine and outer altar were sweet with flower offerings, and the congregation while not large in number was fervent in its appreciation. Thus the sacrifice entailed upon the Boston work has served but to strengthen and stabilize it by giving to the workers a deeper sense of responsibility. Swami Paramananda expects to be again in Boston about June first and will remain several weeks.

EASTERTIDE AT ANANDA-ASHRAMA

Eastertide began at Ananda-Ashrama several days before Easter, the preparations being as much a part of the sacred festival as the Services themselves. The whole working force of the Ashrama was busy clearing away the brush from new areas of the property, creating charming groves and shady nooks, where the tired could rest and spend their time in silent thought. Some of the devoted followers, with great loving spirit, also came to help. Everything was done with incredible speed under the personal supervision of Swami Paramananda. The Swami was the most tireless and active of all the workers, ever busy with pick, axe, saw, hatchet or shears, climbing and pruning the oaks with great dexterity and skill.

On Good Friday there was a Service at three o'clock which was attended by a large number of faithful devotees. With remarkable simplicity and clarity the Swami spoke on the deeper significance of the day—the Crucifixion, its message of immortality; the blessing and glory of pain and adversity endured without resistance; its purifying and strengthening influence in our lives.

The Swami had conceived the idea of making it possible for all who desired to share in the beauty of the Ashrama, to spend the day of Easter. There were Services held—a Sunrise Service, a Devotional Service at eleven, and the regular Sunday afternoon Service at three-thirty. The Ashrama opened wide its gates and avenues to an eager and appreciative number, who reached the mountain side just as the first gleam of the rising sun touched the plateau, where, in deep reverence, they awaited the Service. For many days will the splendor of the Sunrise Service live in the hearts of those who witnessed both the light of the sun creeping over the hills and the light of understanding in-

filling their hearts. It was an exalting moment, a blessed experience!

The words of the Swami on "Rebirth" held a deeper meaning at that hour, and were in such wonderful harmony with the marvels of dawn, the miracle of spring, that each and every one understood more fully the true nature of the feast of the Resurrection. The birds, intoxicated with the joy of life and the beauty of morn, vied with each other for the honor of voicing their delight. They carolled loudly their exuberance as the choir sang the Easter Hymn by the Swami: "All Souls Awake," which had been specially set to music for the occasion; and never did his song of "Dawn, Lovely Dawn" ring with greater meaning than at that moment of sunrise. By the end of the Service the sun's rays completely enveloped the plateau and all those present felt the benediction of the hour and gave thanks.

After the Service breakfast was served in the Guest Canyon for those who wished to remain. Later all were at liberty to enjoy the unusual beauty of the place, made ready for them with so much love, until the Devotional Service at eleven o'clock. By that time the sun had advanced considerably in its course and was shedding its warmth and blessing in full measure, symbolic of the great ardor welling in all hearts. Places were found underneath the sheltering trees on the terrace facing an altar covered with Easter lilies and other offerings of flowers. There in this beautiful setting, fanned by a soft and fragrant breeze, never to be forgotten instruction on our relation to the Infinite and All-Abiding Spirit was given us by the Swami, in stirring and poetic language.

It was marvellous with what rapidity the Swami changed his robe after Service and went to the kitchen to prepare with his own hands the noon meal which followed. Tables

were set for more than sixty people beneath the trees in the Guest Canyon and all partook of the feast with the sanctity of a sacrament. The Swami moving among the happy guests was full of radiance, joyous that the opportunity had been given him to shower blessings on so many.

The Afternoon Service was held in the patio which was filled to overflowing. All present were prepared by the previous Services to receive the spirit of the address on "Incarnation and Resurrection." Through the Swami's words one was lifted to great heights. Many declared that for the first time they understood the true significance of the Resurrection. Every heart that listened could not help but feel the rising of a new and holier life of which Christ's Resurrection was the sign and symbol. The final prayer and benediction were particularly inspiring and closed this memorable Easter, sending homeward all hearts aglow with joy, hope and gratitude. Music formed a large part of the day's Services. Many of the Swami's sacred poems were sung by the Ashrama choir. A Russian artist sang several Russian songs with great fervor and beauty.

Numerous gifts and offerings were brought. One gentleman who two days before had visited the Ashrama for the first time was so deeply touched by its spirit and peaceful atmosphere, that he came to the Sunrise Service bringing with him six gallons of orange juice specially prepared from oranges in his own grove.

The heartfelt and renewed expressions of all those who had shared in the first public Easter celebration at the Ashrama were both touching and gratifying. The Swami, in response to numerous requests has promised another day of Retreat in the near future. It is the deep desire of the Swami that the Ashrama shall exist for the blessings of the largest possible number.—H. C. A.

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Message of the East



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SOUL'S TRIUMPH

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POISE AND EFFICIENCY

Lecture by Swami Paramananda



IT IS not through chance that a soul is turbulent; it is also not through chance that we see some one who exhibits a sacred sense of poise and unshakable sanctity. Poise comes only when our lives have blended with Truth and we cannot blend our life with Truth accidentally. It springs from certain qualities in our soul, and these qualities we do not earn when we live casually and carelessly. They must be cultivated. Every hour of life is giving to us something to foster these qualities or to hinder them. There are thoughts which, as soon as they rise in our mind, make us feel better; they inspire us, they rouse our spirit, they open a new vista before our mind, and thus we become bigger. Also there are thoughts which make us feel small. We may not realize that we are feeling this smallness, but every one who contacts us feels it. We become suffocated in our own body because of our thoughts; they leave no room for the soul's expansion. We already have a narrow enough sphere; but we make it narrower through petty thoughts, small ideas, hateful attitude, and through anger and impatience.

Poise is a very wonderful attribute of the soul. I cannot imagine a man rising to any great height, to any great

magnitude who lacks this quality. It does not belong peculiarly to East or West, it is the special quality of the soul. How does one gain this poise? Through sanctity, through consecration, by fastening the heart to something other than self and never following the dictates of self-will. The man who is constantly tossing himself and tossing others, creating unrest and impatience, perpetually generates within himself and in others troubled emotions. We know how it is when we come in contact with a person who makes us feel nervous or tired and irritable. We may have all kinds of affirmations or denials in our mind, but these feelings continue to exist. Why? Because they exist in human character.

What makes up human character and the atmosphere which people create? The sum total of their thoughts and feelings, both inner and outer. Because of these, people are constantly exhibiting some special virtue or its lack; they are constantly creating an atmosphere. We partake of that atmosphere, and either we are depressed and hurt by it or we experience fresh enthusiasm, new courage and inspiration. It makes us feel light-hearted. It is too much perhaps for us to expect that whenever we are full of unrest or unhappy, we should go to some one else to tune us and put us in right mood. Even if some one could do it for us, we may again lose our bearing. It must be of our own making. It is a task for the individual himself.

There are models, beautiful ones, spiritual beings who are sanctified, and such examples are the greatest that the world can copy. We do not want to copy the characteristics of an angry man or of a soul that is intoxicated with ambition and vanity; but innately we want to absorb those virtues which make one like a mountain, unshakable and steadfast. Calamity may befall the man who possesses

these, many painful conditions may overtake him, the world may turn its back towards him, all kinds of things may go wrong with him, yet we find him unmoved and calm. This calmness is not, as some people may imagine, a negative morbid quality; that the man, not being capable of striking back, has no alternative left for him but to endure. His calmness springs rather from a triumphant spirit. The outer conditions come and try to thwart him, but he does not live on that plane. Therein lies the secret.

It is not the mental calculation which we carry with us when we go to our work or business, or when we enter our home, that is going to give us the tranquillity and poise we need for our own preservation and for the peace and harmony of our family and of humanity. What have we to do with humanity, you may ask. Is it not sufficing if we can find a little happiness in our own heart and in our own home? Humanity is not so distant as we think. We cannot have anything worth while in our own soul, in our own heart, without enriching the destiny of all mankind. The man who thinks big thoughts and lives high ideals, perhaps silently and quietly, without ostentation or publicity, is the man who contributes something lasting and abiding. We see on the water surface how many bubbles come up and burst, but the main body of water is always there, still and dependable; similarly there is in the quality of man's life an underlying something which remains always serene and dependable. As long as we forget this and run after passing fancies, we produce nothing but big bubbles, which have no lasting existence; they vanish as they rise.

There is no other disease but the disease that springs from self. Of course this term "self" can be used in many ways; but here it is meant in the sense of that which rouses the evil in man,—egotism, vanity, passion, that some-

thing which comes when we want what belongs to others or when we desire something better than others. Whenever we indulge in selfish instincts and petty thoughts, they always arise from that one central point, "I" and "mine." A man of spiritual experience drops these altogether for the good of his own self and the good of humanity. There is no great soul who ever strikes a discordant selfish note, or tries to seek victory through slaughter and annihilation of his enemies. He seeks by other means to reach his end. He conquers himself first. He first becomes the master of himself; and after finding his peace within, he gives a calm atmosphere to the world. Picture the image of Buddha, what does it represent? A serenity, a calm which comes to the soul only when it has transcended the realm of selfishness and self-seeking. Picture the life of Christ. In the midst of all opposition and what the world calls agony it was centred in something that was unshakable.

You may wonder why this serene poise cannot be distributed like a patent medicine, when people need it so much. We all know that it is necessary for our body, our mind and our nervous system; that each one of us would be a better person if we could maintain our inner peace and calm. But it is not anything that can be imposed from outside. It is something we must all earn. There are thoughts we can hold in our mind which will instantly bring a sense of relaxation, a sense of majesty within our soul. The body in spite of itself will respond and become pliable. Instead of being tense and rigid, even to the breaking point, it will become flexible; because it always yields to thought. That is the reason why sometimes we see a person exhibiting most wonderful beauty, very different from ordinary beauty. It is not the result of polishing the body or touching up by artificial means; it is a loveliness that rises from

the inner instinct of man. And wherefrom does it come? It comes from the depths within. As soon as we touch that inner depth, we are incapable of doing anything that is ignoble sordid or unpleasing to our higher instinct. This is the secret. It is not by any artificial method that it comes. There may be many rules and exercises and affirmations that we may repeat; but it is the quality of the soul which gives us that wonderful, most coveted beauty.

One of the mystics tells us that every human life should try to imitate the example of the tree or the example of mother earth. We plough deep into the earth, yet it continues to hold us up. A still better example is given by the tree. A person cuts its branches, yet it continues to give him shade and shelter. These are symbolic illustrations of life. If we think of these and try to understand their spiritual significance, we shall cease to be impatient or fretful. We are always complaining because some one else has done us an injury or robbed us of our happiness. No one else can rob us of our happiness, we rob ourselves. Suppose some one calls us by unkind names or uses harsh expression, or even tries to thwart us deliberately, yet it cannot touch us unless we make ourselves vulnerable through our own attitude or action. The people who do not entertain unkind feelings, harmful thoughts, unloving attitude, no one can harm them. That is the greatest safeguard we can have. But this requires great calmness of spirit. The small man lives on the surface. Every word gives him a jarring note. Sometimes elation lifts him up to the sky, the next moment he falls into depths of despondency. The man of larger vision goes deeper into life and he remains poised.

Tranquillity and poise give us certain qualities which make our life more fruitful. If we think calmly and deeply,

we can act profoundly and efficiently. But to-day in our modern life we altogether disregard this. A man believes he can spend his whole night in worry, calculation and scheming; then get up in the morning and really accomplish something. He needs freshness of spirit. His body needs re-strengthening; his mind must have the stimulation of inspiration, and these do not come to a soul that is indifferent to higher laws. People want happiness; people want all the beautiful things that make life complete; but these must be acquired through intelligent effort. It is not that we need to sacrifice or make ourselves martyrs. All the efforts that we are making now, all the energy that we are expending, perhaps in misdirected ways: we must direct these through proper channels and they will bring us rich fruition. This, however, requires calmness of spirit.

The most beautiful illustration that any one has ever given is the picture of a body of still water. The surface of water which is absolutely calm, how accurately it gives every image; but when it is agitated, not only does it not give a clear picture, it distorts. If a clear body of water can do so much, how much more a calm spirit will give to man. Yet these things we neglect. We say it is all right, we can go through the world and do our part,—we can work with our hands even though our mind is stirred up. We cannot neglect the most vital factor in our life. Whether any one else has offended us or tried to hurt us is not the question. The thing is, we can never disturb our own balance and benefit by it. We harm ourselves more than any one else, whenever we lack dignity, whenever we lose our poise. Even when troubles and disturbances come from all angles, what we need most is not to run for help from outside, but to keep a calm spirit.

It is through that, we learn to overcome evil. If we

grow nervous, we accomplish nothing. You may say: Some people are born with nervous tendency, with unsettled spirit, and it is natural for them to be thus. That is a tremendous illusion. We are not born with unsettled spirit; and we are not so weak that we cannot cure it, even if we think we are born with it. There is within us a Spirit which is always poised and calm; and when we find our contact with that source of perfect peace, we can cure all our ills. Form the habit of giving yourself a little opportunity, find a chance to connect yourself with that reservoir of life. It may sound visionary and vague and fictitious, but there is within the soul of man a real and inexhaustible supply. When he fails to draw from that supply and runs after outer things, although he may have a passionate longing for fulfillment, he will find only shadows.

When we contact our inner life and realize the true quality of our soul, something happens to us. A person who is fretful, who is nervous and irritable, suddenly becomes transformed; because he cannot contact a bigger thing without being transformed. That is the sum total of life. It is not by running after the pleasures of the world that we find satisfaction. All our experiences should teach us this one great lesson, to turn within. As we learn to turn within and more within, we find a sense of security and safety, and this is the source of all true poise and peace.

O friend, never strike sail to a fear. Come into port greatly, or sail with God the seas. Not in vain you live, for every passing eye is cheered and refined by the vision.—*Emerson.*

Give us to awake with smiles, give us to labour smiling. As the sun lightens the world, so let our loving-kindness make bright this house of our habitation.—*R. L. Stevenson.*

HIGHER CHOICE*By Marcus Aurelius*

Never value anything as profitable to thyself which shall compel thee to break thy promise, to lose thy self-respect, to hate any man, to suspect, to curse, to act the hypocrite, to desire anything which needs walls and curtains; for he who has preferred to everything else his own intelligence and his inner guide acts no tragic part, does not groan, will not need either solitude or much company; and what is chief of all, he will live without either pursuing or flying from death. Whether for a longer or a shorter time he shall have the soul enclosed in the body, he cares not at all.

In the mind of one who is chastened and purified thou wilt find no corruption, nor impurity, nor any sore skinned over. Nor is his life incomplete when fate overtakes him, as one may say of an actor who leaves the stage before ending and finishing the play. Besides, there is in him nothing servile, nor affected, nor too closely bound to other things, nor yet detached from other things, nothing worthy of blame, nothing which seeks a hiding-place.

If thou findest in human life anything better than justice, truth, temperance, fortitude, in a word anything better than thy own mind's satisfaction in the things which it enables thee to do according to right reason, and in the condition that is assigned to thee without thy own choice: if, I say, thou seest anything better than this, turn to it with all thy soul and enjoy the Deity planted in thee, which has subjected to itself all thy appetites, and carefully examines all impressions; and, as Socrates said, has detached itself from the persuasions of sense and has submitted itself to the gods and care for mankind. It is not right that anything of any other kind, such as praise, or power, or enjoyment of pleasure, should come into competition with that which is rationally and practically good.

HOLD FAST TO THY COMPASS

By Swami Paramananda

Sail thy vessel on,—
Steady, friend, steadily sail along.
Water may be rough
Or water may be smooth;
But ever hold fast to thy compass.
The sky may smile
Or the sky may frown—
Hold fast to thy compass.
Wind may roar
Or wind may be still;
But hold fast, hold fast to thy compass
and sail thy vessel on.
Steady, friend, steadily sail along.

DISCRIMINATION AND SURRENDER

From Conversations of Swami Turiyananda

As a bird flies to the sky with its two wings, so we must have the two wings of discrimination and renunciation to fly to the heights of liberation. Spiritual instructions make a lasting impression on the mind that is possessed of discrimination and renunciation, and when there is a lack of these the impression produced is proportionately small. If one has real discrimination and renunciation, one is safe. A man runs after water in a mirage only so long as he mistakes the mirage for real water. Once the delusion is broken, nobody goes to a mirage for water. The truth about it is that he only escapes whom the Mother Herself holds by the hand.

“Everything depends on Thy will, Mother, Thou actest as Thou pleasest.” If we are submissive to Her, She never fails to protect us. The more time passes, the more this idea

appeals to me. "Good and evil—both come from Thee, O Mother. Through Thy will all things come to pass. Thou makest the lame to scale mountains and the elephant to stick in a quagmire." There is a relief in the thought that behind all this there is a Power which guides everything. But the rationalists will not admit this view. They say: "Can an effect be produced without a cause?" And the other party replies: "He is the Cause of cause itself."

In my boyhood, when I saw a puppet-show and heard a puppet scream, I at once thought that it actually made that sound. The puppets seemed to move of their own accord. But later on I was disillusioned to find that some one pulled the wires from behind the scene.

The best servant is he who acts reading his master's mind; he who merely obeys his master's command is the mediocre servant; and the worst servant is he who gets the order but neglects to carry it out. It is very difficult to be a disciple. Have you heard the story of a man who wanted to be a disciple? He went to a Guru (spiritual teacher) and said: "Sir, make me a disciple." The Guru replied: "Will you be able to be one? A disciple has to bring water, fetch wood, and serve the teacher. Will you be able to do all this?" Then the man said, "And what has the Guru to do?" The teacher, smiling, replied: "Not much to speak of. He sits at ease and now and then gives a little instruction. That's all." Then the man said: "If you think it difficult to make me a disciple, why don't you make me a teacher?"

We must decide on a particular course and devote our whole life to it. We must make ourselves ready. Before taking up any work, make yourself fit. Because Krishna-murti drives a motor car, must I try to do the same? It would be foolish. But it is not altogether impossible

feat. If one watches how he does it and makes one's self gradually fit, then one can do it, as Gobar is doing. Most people do not know their own strength.

Books on Yoga say that all power is in us. We must, however, learn to control the mind through proper discipline, then only will this power be manifest. For the accumulation of spiritual power absolute continence is needed. From continence comes strength. Meditation also is a great help. When the mind is withdrawn from all other objects except one and fixed on that, then the succession of similar impressions on that object is called meditation. As Swami Vivekananda used to say, "Pinning the mind to some particular object like a lump of dough is called concentration." Why do not all have concentration? Because they do not fulfill the condition for it, absolute continence. This is the source of strength. What can you expect of one who lacks this strength? The long and short of it is that one must have full self-control. The Gita says—"In my opinion, spiritual practice is impossible for one who has not self-control. But one who has controlled his senses may, if he tries, attain it by adopting the proper means."

People follow their own whims and fail to get good results. The Scriptures are there, but they do not turn to them. Nor will they listen to the teacher. In the end they become unfit for spiritual practice. One who is moderate in food and pastime, who is moderately engaged in work, and who divides his time proportionately between sleep and wakefulness,—such a man finds an end to all miseries.

If it be my lot to crawl, I will crawl contentedly; if to fly, I will fly with alacrity, but as long as I can avoid it, I will never be unhappy.—*Sydney Smith.*

SPIRITUAL MAXIMS

St. John of the Cross

(A Spanish Carmelite Monk and close associate of St. Theresa. 16th Century.)

Do not despise others because as it seems to you they do not possess the virtues you thought they had. They may be pleasing to God for other reasons which you cannot discover.

Never excuse yourself. Listen calmly to the reprimand and consider it to come from God.

Make neither much nor little of him who may be against you, and strive always to please God. Pray that His will may be done, and love Him much, for it is His due.

Love to be unknown to yourself and others; never regard the good nor the evil of others.

The communications which come really from God have this property, that they humble and exalt the soul at the same time, for in the way of the Spirit to descend is to ascend, and to ascend is to descend.

When God communicates His gifts and graces to the soul, He excites in it a repugnance to accept honours and distinctions; but in the way of humility and self-abasement, He gives it ease and readiness.

If you wish devotion to be born in your heart, the love of God to grow, together with the desire for divine things, cleanse your soul from every desire and self-seeking, so that nothing of the kind remains with you. For as a sick man, freed from the evil humours which troubled him, feels instantly returning health and a taste for his food, so shall you recover your health in God if you rid yourself of your spiritual disorders: and if this be not done, whatever you may do, you will make no progress.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(The introduction appeared in July, 1924. Subsequent chapters in successive numbers.)

IX

BEGINNINGS OF THE WORK IN BOSTON

The Swami's first Christmas was spent in New York, also the second. The third was celebrated in Mrs. Ole Bull's house in Cambridge. Sister Nivedita and Sir J. C. Bose, the famous botanist, with Lady Bose were also there; and Sister Nivedita arranged a Christmas Eve Service in the truly eclectic inclusive spirit of Vedanta. Holy Ganges water stood in a porcelain shell held by a Christian angel; the Swami, who conducted the Service and gave the final prayer, chanted Vedic texts in Sanskrit and sang Bengalee hymns to the Divine Mother. Other guests sang carols of Jesus and Mary; Nivedita herself read the narrative of the Nativity as given in St. Luke; and at the close she requested the Swami to bless all present with the Ganges water that she herself had carried all the way from India. But this Service was not the chief motive of the visit to Cambridge. In a letter of December 8th, 1908, written to me in India, we read: "This is just a line to tell you I am going to Boston and I leave New York on Friday. Pray to the Mother that this new career which I am undertaking may be Her own work. May I feel that alone."

With Mrs. Bull's invitation for the holiday season she had sent an urgent request that the Swami come prepared to remain permanently and start a Centre in Boston. Remembering a chance remark of Swami Vivekananda that Boston was the most difficult and the most worth while place in America, he felt favorably inclined towards the proposal. His decision, however, was somewhat shaken when he discussed the matter with Mrs. Bull and Sister Nivedita.

Anxious to sponsor the new work, they had mapped out a detailed and rigid plan for it in which politics were mingled with religion. To move by human calculation was totally alien to the Swami's habit of life. He knew but one Guide, the unfailing, all-wise Power speaking in the silence of his soul; and he had always gone forward spontaneously and planlessly, attentive only to That. Any other method, he felt confident, would hamper his free action and predestine the new undertaking to failure. He determined, therefore, to set out independently and look to God alone. "I will begin the work in strength, not in weakness," he writes, in another letter. "I will try my best to do it; and if help does not come from anywhere, I will try to be contented, thinking it is the Mother's will."

The Swami was unfamiliar with Boston, but he knew some Hindu students and he determined to join them. They were living in a shabby lodging-house in Appleton Street. The place was unclean; the bathroom, used by many people, was ill-kept; and the only accommodation available was a cot in the public parlor. He left his trunk at the express office, put aside his usual traditions of living and met the situation with cheerful courage. The next morning he began a search for more suitable quarters. At the end of three days he was able to move into an inexpensive lodging in St. Botolph Street. It was clean and decent, but far from comfortable, and the months spent there were months of real hardship.

The house was not sufficiently heated and sometimes he had to break the ice in his water pitcher before he could wash in the morning. He ate in cheap restaurants and not infrequently, when he did not find one where he chanced to be, he went dinnerless or supperless to a class or lecture engagement. His passing comment in a letter to me in India

at this time was: "As you see, I am working in Boston—working for a new Centre. You know how hard it is to build up something in the midst of strange people, and one must go through certain discomforts and hardships." Austere simplicity was not alien to his habitual manner of life, for whenever he is left free to shape his mode of living, he always shows himself indifferent to physical comforts. He bore with cheerful fortitude whatever came to him in his new life; but it put a great strain on his body.

Now and then his letters contained amusing incidents in his daily round. The humor of them, however, was lost on Swami Ramakrishnananda. They only made him uneasy for the Swami's welfare. When he heard that he was making a meal on "one egg and buttered toast," called across the half partition of a dairy lunch, he grew gravely solicitous and said to me: "Write to Paramananda that he must eat enough. If he lacks for money we will send it from here." This gave me a new glimpse of the warmth of his love for the Swami, for the Monastery at Mylapore was none too prosperous at that time, and ampler meals in Boston would mean poorer ones in Madras. The Swami on his side was equally concerned for Swami Ramakrishnananda's well-being and out of the little he had, through unremitting denial, he succeeded in saving a generous sum badly needed for building repairs at the Madras Monastery.

Lack of ease in his daily life, however, was a matter of small concern to the Swami. He was eager to be at work. But how and where to begin? He had brought with him from New York a letter of introduction to a lady living on Commonwealth Avenue. When he presented it, he found that a death had just occurred in the family, so he withdrew at once, merely leaving the letter with his card. A few days later he received a cordial invitation from the lady

to lunch with her. She was an ardent Swedenborgian and a large class for the study of Swedenborg's writings met almost daily at her house. She requested the Swami to remain for the afternoon and address the Class. Then he was urged to return and give another talk on the following morning.

After this second talk a member of the Class, who lived not far away near the Charles River embankment, asked if he would speak in her home. She was leaving town and Wednesday was the only available day. As it was then Monday, it did not seem possible in two days to gather together a large number; but forty-five responded, many of them being prominent people of Boston. The outcome of the meeting was significant. The Swami's simple and direct way of giving his message created an immediate and deep impression; a regular class for the study of concentration and meditation was formed and many joined. A lady in Waltham organized another class; a series of drawing-room lectures was arranged at a delightful home in Milton, a suburb of Boston; he was also invited to lecture at the Public Library in Lynn; and soon his time was so filled that he sometimes had three meetings in one day and often two.

On his own initiative he engaged a hall on Huntington Avenue and announced a series of Sunday afternoon lectures. The hall seated about two hundred; it was full the first Sunday and people were most hearty in their enthusiasm. Mrs. Bull was there and as she grasped the Swami's hand warmly after the lecture, her appreciative remark was: "You have an unusually happy way of presenting the teaching. Another might say the same thing, yet he would antagonize." The basic unifying note sounding through all the Swami's teaching now, sounded then too; and she had caught its ring.

There was a break in his Boston activities at the beginning of March. He was asked by the New York Vedanta Society to come there and conduct the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday; but before he left, an effort was made to create an organized Centre in Boston. A meeting was called after the final Sunday lecture before his going, and there was much discussion of officers and ways and means. While he was gone, those who had started this new departure, changed the hall for the public meetings and engaged from another Society the use of two rooms for the Classes and the sale of literature. The Swami always felt that this gave the new work a perceptible check. The attempt to organize was premature and contrary to his normal method. It has always been his custom to let his work outgrow itself and demand new and expanded conditions by its inherent need. He never forces growth. He lets the petals of the blossom of his effort drop off through the swelling of the fruit. His course has been like the slow upward push of a long-lived tree. That is why in all his work there has been no halting or falling back, no boisterous glory and also no failure or defeat; but a gentle, unswerving, continuous going forward to the highest ends with undaunted steadfastness. The results visible to-day are too obvious to require definition.

It took some weeks to regain the lost momentum caused by the visit to New York and the change of place for the Sunday lecture. When the season closed, however, the Swami felt fully justified in continuing his work another season. The struggle to establish it had not been a light one. The bodily hardships formed only a small part of the difficulties encountered. Swami Ramakrishnananda followed the Swami's progress with the tenderest interest. Once when the weekly mail brought word of the happy solution of

a perplexing problem, he exclaimed with triumphant satisfaction: "Now the boy has won his spurs," and another day when he learned that a trying situation had been overcome, he said to me: "There is no doubt that Paramananda was born with realization. Otherwise he could not remain so steady under all circumstances."

The next summer was passed at the pleasant home in Milton where he had given the course of drawing-room lectures in the early spring. His hostess had come one day near the middle of May and carried him off from his lodging for a fortnight's visit. The first fortnight stretched into a second, then a third and fourth, until the summer was over and he had not gone anywhere, except once or twice to New York or Greenacre for brief periods. He was even dissuaded from a contemplated visit to England. His hostess was reluctant to let him go, feeling the blessing of so rare a guest, who with his youthful gayety and gentle wisdom had brought new freshness of life into her home. It had always had for her the sanctity of a sanctuary and the Swami's presence seemed a new consecration.

Often he was up and out at six in the morning, singing his way through the tangle of phlox and poppies in a lovely garden lying in a little hollow below the terrace, with a tiny lake beneath tall trees not far away. Now and then he found his hostess there before him, scraping the grass from flower-edged paths or pulling weeds from over-grown beds; and they would talk together, sometimes playfully, sometimes of graver things. Then there were long philosophic discussions on the curved seat beside the trickling fountain outside the open-air dining room; or they would sit on the terrace in the moonlight and the Swami would tell them of life in India. They also read much aloud, especially in the evening. His hostess however was not

selfish with her unusual guest. She sought to share him in various ways. A close friend was invited to spend the whole summer with them, and many others were asked for luncheon, dinner, tea, and for breakfast even. Out of these numerous meetings came a few vital contacts, made with people who penetrated beneath the outer charm of the Swami's winning personality to the deeper inner charm which gave the shining light in his eyes, the radiance to his smile, the serenity and gentleness to his manner. They sensed he had a lofty message and they asked for it. Among these was a gentleman of Milton who was shut away from active life by bodily illness. The wife had been strongly attracted to the Swami and had asked him to come to see her husband. The Swami went and made a delightful friend. He found the gentleman deeply interested in the Upanishads and much discouraged over the poor translation of them he had at hand. He begged the Swami to translate them and write a commentary. It was this friendly suggestion which led to the Swami's subsequent translation of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita.

This summer at Milton was followed by others, and it was interesting to watch the gradual transformation of the house through the Swami's subtle silent influence, from an acknowledged centre of social and intellectual activity to a quiet forest hermitage, not unlike the woodland retreats of ancient India. Although the house was not isolated, it was so placed in the property, and the grounds were so laid out and planted that it gave the sense of great remoteness and seclusion. The rooms were crowded with pictures, ornaments, and old embroideries, collected during frequent journeyings in Europe. The second summer everything of secondary artistic value was put away, leaving spaces in which to enjoy more fully what remained. Entertainments

were reduced to a minimum, and only those were invited to the house who were in sympathy with the new order of things.

The third summer all servants were given up, to create a freer atmosphere for meditation and study, and the members of the community family divided the labor of the household. Each one took care of his or her own room; some washed dishes, others the pots and pans; and the hostess herself did the cooking. We shelled peas or peeled carrots on the verandah, while the Swami expounded the Upanishads, or explained the Bible, giving to Christ's teachings the deeper interpretation of an Oriental. These informal hours proved the seed of an interesting course of lectures on "The Bible in the Light of Vedanta" delivered at the Centre in Boston the following winter. We swept and dusted, weeded and sewed; then when the morning's work and study were done, we played croquet or other games on the lawn in the little valley below, with lemonade under the trees to quench the thirst of both victor and vanquished. Swami's side was invariably victorious. To be his opponent meant sure defeat. An artist who joined the family the third summer grew so grimly determined to win at least one set of tennis that he used to go elsewhere to practise, coming back each time expecting success; but he always lost the set, although occasionally he won a game. He made an important addition to our life, for he had a remarkable gift for improvising on the piano, and our conversation in the evening had frequent melodious interludes of music.

Sometimes he played at the evening Service, but more often it was the hostess herself; for the hour of sunset was an hour of prayer with us always. We had made a lovely Chapel in the studio on the upper floor. Swami is seldom

anywhere for long without creating a place for worship. This one was beautiful with church embroideries and hangings; an altar stood at one end, lovely and fragrant with flowers from the garden; a temple lamp threw a ruddy glow over everything; and when the evening hymn sounded out from the little organ brought from the music room we seemed very far away from the pains and distresses of the world and very near to the heart of God.

People began to envy our happy simple life, with its wholesome mingling of work, play and prayer. Now and then some one was asked to make a part of the family for a week or two, and gain a new impetus from the spiritual lesson which the Swami's daily living never fails to give. Occasionally there were two or three such guests, but we were seldom more than six. The house provided an ideal setting for the Swami and his teaching and became a second home for the Boston work as it gradually took form. It was once more an organized centre, now, not of social, but of spiritual activity; and the one who presided over it has been ever since one of the Swami's ablest assistants and one of his staunchest friends. (To be continued)

THE VEDANTA CENTRE OF BOSTON

During Swami Paramananda's prolonged absences at Ananda-Ashrama, the activities of the Vedanta Centre of Boston have been carried on by the members with ever increasing devotion. Easter Sunday Shrine and outer altar were sweet with flower offerings, and the congregation while not large in number was fervent in its appreciation. Thus the sacrifice entailed upon the Boston work has served but to strengthen and stabilize it by giving to the workers a deeper sense of responsibility. Swami Paramananda expects to be again in Boston about June first and will remain several weeks.

EASTERTIDE AT ANANDA-ASHRAMA

Eastertide began at Ananda-Ashrama several days before Easter, the preparations being as much a part of the sacred festival as the Services themselves. The whole working force of the Ashrama was busy clearing away the brush from new areas of the property, creating charming groves and shady nooks, where the tired could rest and spend their time in silent thought. Some of the devoted followers, with great loving spirit, also came to help. Everything was done with incredible speed under the personal supervision of Swami Paramananda. The Swami was the most tireless and active of all the workers, ever busy with pick, axe, saw, hatchet or shears, climbing and pruning the oaks with great dexterity and skill.

On Good Friday there was a Service at three o'clock which was attended by a large number of faithful devotees. With remarkable simplicity and clarity the Swami spoke on the deeper significance of the day—the Crucifixion, its message of immortality; the blessing and glory of pain and adversity endured without resistance; its purifying and strengthening influence in our lives.

The Swami had conceived the idea of making it possible for all who desired to share in the beauty of the Ashrama, to spend the day of Easter. There were Services held—a Sunrise Service, a Devotional Service at eleven, and the regular Sunday afternoon Service at three-thirty. The Ashrama opened wide its gates and avenues to an eager and appreciative number, who reached the mountain side just as the first gleam of the rising sun touched the plateau, where, in deep reverence, they awaited the Service. For many days will the splendor of the Sunrise Service live in the hearts of those who witnessed both the light of the sun creeping over the hills and the light of understanding in-

filling their hearts. It was an exalting moment, a blessed experience!

The words of the Swami on "Rebirth" held a deeper meaning at that hour, and were in such wonderful harmony with the marvels of dawn, the miracle of spring, that each and every one understood more fully the true nature of the feast of the Resurrection. The birds, intoxicated with the joy of life and the beauty of morn, vied with each other for the honor of voicing their delight. They carolled loudly their exuberance as the choir sang the Easter Hymn by the Swami: "All Souls' Awake," which had been specially set to music for the occasion; and never did his song of "Dawn, Lovely Dawn" ring with greater meaning than at that moment of sunrise. By the end of the Service the sun's rays completely enveloped the plateau and all those present felt the benediction of the hour and gave thanks.

After the Service breakfast was served in the Guest Canyon for those who wished to remain. Later all were at liberty to enjoy the unusual beauty of the place, made ready for them with so much love, until the Devotional Service at eleven o'clock. By that time the sun had advanced considerably in its course and was shedding its warmth and blessing in full measure, symbolic of the great ardor welling in all hearts. Places were found underneath the sheltering trees on the terrace facing an altar covered with Easter lilies and other offerings of flowers. There in this beautiful setting, fanned by a soft and fragrant breeze, never to be forgotten instruction on our relation to the Infinite and All-Abiding Spirit was given us by the Swami, in stirring and poetic language.

It was marvellous with what rapidity the Swami changed his robe after Service and went to the kitchen to prepare with his own hands the noon meal which followed. Tables

were set for more than sixty people beneath the trees in the Guest Canyon and all partook of the feast with the sanctity of a sacrament. The Swami moving among the happy guests was full of radiance, joyous that the opportunity had been given him to shower blessings on so many.

The Afternoon Service was held in the patio which was filled to overflowing. All present were prepared by the previous Services to receive the spirit of the address on "Incarnation and Resurrection." Through the Swami's words one was lifted to great heights. Many declared that for the first time they understood the true significance of the Resurrection. Every heart that listened could not help but feel the rising of a new and holier life of which Christ's Resurrection was the sign and symbol. The final prayer and benediction were particularly inspiring and closed this memorable Easter, sending homeward all hearts aglow with joy, hope and gratitude. Music formed a large part of the day's Services. Many of the Swami's sacred poems were sung by the Ashrama choir. A Russian artist sang several Russian songs with great fervor and beauty.

Numerous gifts and offerings were brought. One gentleman who two days before had visited the Ashrama for the first time was so deeply touched by its spirit and peaceful atmosphere, that he came to the Sunrise Service bringing with him six gallons of orange juice specially prepared from oranges in his own grove.

The heartfelt and renewed expressions of all those who had shared in the first public Easter celebration at the Ashrama were both touching and gratifying. The Swami, in response to numerous requests has promised another day of Retreat in the near future. It is the deep desire of the Swami that the Ashrama shall exist for the blessings of the largest possible number.—H. C. A.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

JUN GIFT
17 1925

Message of the East



JUNE, 1925

SOUL'S TRIUMPH

Issued by

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"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tyndall.

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MY CREED

By Swami Paramananda.



BIDING Presence, Spirit of the universe,
Breath of our life,
In temples and chapels did I seek to wor-
ship Thee.
On pilgrimage I sought Thee;
In seclusion I craved to find Thee by quiet medi-
tation.
Many long roads have I followed with eager
spirit.
In many turns I thought I almost touched Thee.
Now I find thee here,—here in this nearest
space that is not space.
I see Thee everywhere!
Thus the holy truth of Scriptures, known to all
seers, I see with my naked eyes:
That Thou are ever present, pervading and
permeating all.
Now I bow before Thee,
Neither to the east nor to the west,
Neither to the north nor to the south;
But to all quarters I make my obeisance;

For I see Thee in all.
Is my worship in my sacred shrine ended?
My intimate communion before the chosen
 altar, will it be no more?
Nay, I find Thee there still;
Yet art Thou manifest in all without.
Thus I worship Thee in forms of infinite vast-
 ness.
In Thy unfathomed glory the atom of my life
 is magnified.
In this unfolded vision my soul is expanded;
And knowing how my finite life is contained in
 Thine Infinite Majesty,
My soul is at peace.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Let a wise man blow off the impurities of his soul, as a smith blows off the impurities of silver, one by one, little by little, and from time to time.—*Buddha*.

The soul's descent to the body was predestined so that it might hear what it had not heard. It is like a flash of lightning shining over the meadow and disappearing as if it had never gleamed.—*Avicenna*.

There is a treasure that man or woman may possess, a treasure laid up in the heart, a treasure of charity, piety, temperance, soberness. It is found in the sacred shrine, in the priestly assembly, in the individual man, in the stranger and sojourner, in the father, the mother, the elder brother. A treasure secure, impregnable, that cannot pass away when a man leaves the fleeting riches of this world. This he takes with him after death.

—*Khuddaka-Patha*.

When one candle is lighted, we light many by it; and when God hath kindled the Life of His glory in one man's heart, He often enkindles many by the flame of that.—*Peter Sterry, English Platonist. 17th Century.*

It is deathlessness, bliss, peace, the divinity in humanity that shines out and makes itself felt in spite of the thickest layers of ignorance. This is the real man, the deathless one, the free.—*Swami Vivekananda.*

The whole secret of remaining young in spite of years and even of grey hairs is to cherish enthusiasm in one's self, by poetry, by contemplation, by charity,—that is, in fewer words, by the maintenance of harmony in the soul.—*Henri Frederic Amiel.*

Self or the immortal soul is below, above, behind, before, right and left—Self is all this. He who sees, perceives, and understands this, loves the Self, delights in the Self, revels in the Self, rejoices in the Self—he becomes a self-ruler; he is lord and master in all the worlds. But those who think differently from this, live in perishable worlds, and have other beings for their rulers.—*Chandogya-Upanishad.*

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.—*Isaiah.*

SOUL'S TRIUMPH

By Swami Paramananda

(Address delivered at dedication of an Open-Air Temple at Ananda-Ashrama.)

Poets and mystics have been inspired by nature because Nature is vibrant to those who have resourcefulness and livingness of soul. We may think that we all have living souls. Theoretically for us they are living; but they become more living and more vibrant when there is a definite point of contact with the source of life. That is the reason why we find in some people a greater manifestation of triumph over all the ills of life; while we see other souls weighed down by their troubles and tribulations, miseries and misfortunes. They have become so absolutely overwhelmed by existing conditions that even though the Bibles and sacred classics of the world are constantly reminding them of their Source and of their omnipotent nature, they are not able to rise above their ills. This is because such a conception of the soul they have in theory only. But it is not in theory that we realize the glory of the soul. It is not in theory that we find a real contact with Godhead. It is in silence, in solitude, in the hour of meditation, in our aloofness from all things that are distracting and debasing, it is then that we gain a contact with our Source; and through that contact we rise to greater heights.

No man can rise from the material, no man can disconnect himself from that which is heavy and unwholesome, without feeling renewed, without becoming more and more living and more and more vital. It is this quality in the soul that makes us fruitful; that gives us power to do, power to act, power to love, power to give. When we think of our smallness, we are afraid to give, because we fear we are going to lose by giving. We imagine that we have

only a certain amount, and if we give more than that amount we shall have less for ourselves. It is this calculation which makes for discord, war, intolerance and rupture in human families. One of the most essential things in life is not to try so feverishly to battle against evil conditions, but to overcome them through knowledge, through wisdom, through higher qualities. Nothing gives us the power to do this so much as access to our inner soul.

When a man knows his true worth he ceases to be small. When a man knows the immensity of his soul, he is incapable of doing anything that is sordid, base and selfish. We preach to a man, "You must not be selfish, you must not do anything that is evil, you must not steal," yet in spite of all our teaching and preaching and laws, he continues to be selfish. Why? Because we cannot stop evil merely through restriction. Nor can we overcome evil by evil. Throughout the ages people have fought evil conditions; they have used swords and guns and poison gas, but they have not been able to vanquish evil. Evil is not overcome by evil; it is overcome by contacting good. A man is not redeemed by artificial methods. His salvation is not gained through any code or ritual, or ceremony; his salvation is not determined by any person. It is within his own destiny, held by himself, realized by himself and won by himself. When we understand this, we depend less and less on the artificial aspect of life. We become more and more dependent on that which is solid and abiding. And the soul needs what is enduring and lasting. The soul triumphs through it. It conquers evil when it does not lower its standard even though it may be abused, maltreated or apparently defeated. One who has thus overcome evil does not lie because his enemies lie. He does not hate because his enemies direct their hatred towards

him; he triumphs through spiritual means, and that is the soul's best victory. We never find victory on the physical plane.

Most people yield to their physical desires regarding them as inevitable conditions. Physical lethargy robs them of their spiritual blessings, making them morbid and lifeless. They are ever crying for some one to help them. But the true help is within. There is not a soul who cannot rise up above all conditions, by defying them and becoming victorious. This is one of the most vital teachings that comes down to us through Vedic revelation. It declares that soul must triumph over all things, not with aggressiveness, not by trying to override another; it triumphs because it has attained knowledge and wisdom and discovered certain secrets in the spiritual realm.

When a man has found something that is of worth, he must prove it through his higher qualities. He must subdue all the ordinary propensities in his life and nature, and let the soul qualities shine forth. This is what we need to-day more than anything else. It is not that we need to multiply physical comforts. People are already growing softer and softer, more and more unthinking. Even in the question of salvation they hope that somebody may work it out for them in the shortest possible way, by some sort of calculating machine, so that they may not have to bother with it. That will never be possible. We may deceive ourselves; we may think that some one may come and direct us to salvation; but to attain it the soul must know its own worth. Herein lies the whole secret. A man who is morbid, doubtful, despondent,—despondent because he has no faith in himself, no clear vision in regard to his own real being—how can he take a stand and make the best of life? We must have a foundation. We must find the basic

rock of life, then alone can we begin to rise. All the things that we are doing now, all the energy that we are expending even in our ordinary tasks can be of very great value to us when we have found a solid foundation for life. And what is it? Some say it is religion. Others say that it is understanding the laws of being, the laws of the universe; it is learning to do our duties properly. We may give many, many answers; but the real answer can only be given from the soul itself. Has it found the point of contact with its Maker?

Religion consists in this. What do we know about religion? What is our conception of God? What is our concept of soul? How close have we come to a conscious relationship with the Supreme? We may say that is the business of the church; it is the concern of the soul. Every soul can make a definite contact with its Maker. In fact we can never do justice to ourselves or to our duties until we have found this definite contact. No tree can live when it is severed from its root. A stream cannot flow when it is cut off from its source. It dries up. Same way it is with our life. The fullness of life is only realized when we have perpetual connection with the Source of our life. What are we doing to establish that connection? What are we doing to maintain it? Our whole success depends on that. We cannot establish or maintain this connection from a sense of obligation. It must be from a sense of perpetual joy and enthusiasm, because contact with the Source never fails to fill the soul with enthusiasm.

Our energy is unending. Our mental power is unending. Our force cannot be dried up so long as we keep ourself connected with that Source; but this is something we cannot do by artificial means. It is not enough for a person merely to belong to a church to feel his spiritual nature.

There must be an active, constant and perpetual Presence. This Presence must become a living thing in the life. If we carry something with us very precious, but do not know its value, what will be the reaction? We shall not be any richer. Similarly we carry this wonderful soul that the Vedic sages describe and the Bibles of the world proclaim to us, a soul that is invincible; how then can we go on crying and walking on this earth as beggars.

The immensity of the soul is within this our house of clay. When we have found it there, we find it everywhere. The birds speak to a soul that is awake; the trees, the sky, all Nature seems to glow before him because Nature is the image of God. How little we know of it! We turn a deaf ear to the voice that can speak to our soul. We close our eyes before that image which can give us a sense of sanctity and inspiration. Where can we find God? If we have not found Him within our soul, we shall not find Him without in Nature. If we have not found Him in the internal, we shall find Him nowhere. If we have found Him within, we find Him everywhere.

One of the most impressive things that I have experienced lately, especially in connection with this work, is the living Presence of God in Nature and through Nature. I think people miss a great deal who do not feel this. They close their doors to higher inspiration when they enslave themselves to artificial modes of living. We live in cities, we see only the artificial creation of man—buildings, chimneys, factories, paved streets. It is all right for us to see them, because it is through man He works; but why not sometimes see His direct expression, as we find it in Nature? Nature exhibits a beautiful expression of His Divine image—trees, flowers and birds singing His glory; all these things speak to us with a living voice, that we may

hear Him. The one who does not hear, misses a tremendous thing. First of all Nature rests one. A tired soul finds rest as he comes in contact with Nature. Body is refreshed, soul is reinforced, mind is invigorated. We need these for true understanding and true worship of Divinity.

Worship can be done in one way only—when we feel it; when we are able to express our feelings in some delicate and genuine manner. Nature contributes abundantly, and it is that thought that gave the inspiration to have an open-air temple. God needs no special altar. The altar is already set. Nature with her bounty provides it. Even some of you have noticed when the choir is singing, how the birds sing. Sometimes when I give my chant and benediction, the birds seem to strike their note in rhythm. How much more inspiring these things are than the artificial things we create, and we should not overlook it. On the contrary, we should derive great benefit and inspiration as we come in contact with Nature.

Soul finds its expansion and its power to express when it comes out in the open; and what we find in Nature, we must try to cultivate within. We must not confine ourselves with small and sordid ideas,—that we are little, insignificant; that we can only do a certain amount; that if we give something to another out of impulse, we may be the losers. Constant calculation is the worst possible thing for us. When, on the contrary, we learn to see ourselves from another viewpoint,—not as man of flesh, not as we are represented constantly by others, but as we are truly made in His image, these thoughts inspire us. They uplift our spirit and give us strength, such strength that under all conditions we are able to stand up and not feel the sting of life. There are some people who flourish when all goes according to their calculation and expectation. They are

happy because everything moves as they expect; but when anything goes out of order, they seem to know no way of keeping their balance. There is no out of order. Everything has its place. Even miseries have their place; and the great men instead of being made miserable by their miseries, glorify them. When misfortune befalls them, instead of going down under it they seem to lift their misfortune. That is what we have to learn; and the only way we can learn it, is by laying greater emphasis on our soul nature and less on our bodily nature. If we are overwhelmed by physical life, then we feel the stings of the physical; we feel our aches and pains, our disappointments and sorrows; less and less we think of that part of our being, less and less we feel it. Therefore some of the philosophers declare it to be non-existent, some say it is only relatively existent.

Some people magnify their troubles and some people minimize them. How do they minimize them? Not by any magic. They are able to do it because they are more conscious of their souls, more conscious of God, of their spiritual existence; and before that consciousness ordinary things fade away. Before the light of the sun, darkness vanishes of its own accord. If we can keep that consciousness of the soul, the majestic, the beautiful, the undying soul, then we shall never suffer. How can we do it? When we come in contact with the world, it reminds us of the flesh, of material things, of vanities, of undependable qualities; we cannot help it. The best thing we can do for ourselves, for our religion, for our fellow-beings is to redeem ourselves by soul-consciousness. There is a very beautiful passage in one of the ancient classics of India—"O, man, in order to raise thyself, never lower thyself. Raise thyself by thine own Self, for thou art thine own friend and thou canst be thine own enemy through carelessness."

When our spirit is downcast, our word cannot give comfort to any one. When we ourselves feel unhappy and our mind is full of doubt, it is useless for us to try to preach to some one that doubt is a terrible thing. When we have become united with the Source of our life; when spiritual existence is no longer a theory for us, but we are fully convinced that our first and foremost consideration must be Spirit, then love conquers hatred, all that is small and unworthy is banished from our consciousness, and our soul rising above the flesh becomes triumphant.

SPIRITUAL PEACE

By Miguel de Molinos, 17th Century

The means of obtaining mental peace is not sensual pleasure, but spiritual consolation, and the destruction of self-love.

There is a saying of St. Bernard that the only way to serve God is to do good and to endure evil. He is in error who would reach perfection by means of comfort and consolation. No other consolation may be asked of God than we sacrifice our life to Him from love. The path of our Lord Christ was not the path of comfort and well-being; also, by His words and example He did not counsel us to follow it when He said: "Who would do even as I, must deny himself and take his cross upon him and follow me."

Open your eyes and consider what His counsel and desire were, when He asked us not to follow the pleasure and comfort of our own desires, but to deny ourselves. He said: "He shall deny himself," as if He would say: "He who would follow me and reach perfection must give up his self-love and, leaving all behind, must resign himself completely to the yoke of obedience and submission through self-denial, which is the truest cross." There are many souls resigned

to the will of God who have received from His hand great thoughts, visions and spiritual illumination; yet the Lord withal does not grant them the grace to perform miracles, to know hidden secrets and to predict coming events; while He has endowed other souls with these powers who have ever walked with sorrow, temptation and the true cross, in the spirit of full humility, obedience and submission.

Oh, what great happiness it is for a soul to be oppressed and subordinate! What wealth to be poor! What high honor to be despised! What exaltation to be humbled! What consolation to be sad! What proof of true knowledge it is to be thought ignorant, and lastly, what inexpressible bliss it is to be crucified with Christ! That is the praise of which the apostle said: "Let others boast of their wealth, of their rank, their pleasures and honors, but for us there is no higher honor than to be despised."

"Many are called, but few are chosen", says the Holy Spirit. Many are called for perfection, but only few reach it; because few take upon themselves the cross with patience, endurance, peace and resignation. To deny one's self in all things, to subject one's self to the judgment of others, ever to kill all inherent passions, to destroy one's egoism in every respect, always to follow what is opposed to one's own will, desire and fancy—those are things which only few can do. There are many who preach them, but only few who practise them. Some souls have begun on this path, and walk it daily; they persevere as long as they have the sweet taste of their first enthusiasm; but hardly has this delicious sensation and spiritual enjoyment ceased, than they waver and fall off in the face of the breaking storm of sorrow, temptation and insensibility—a clear sign that they sought themselves, not God or perfection.

The monster of self-love appears everywhere. It seeks

mental pleasures by even leaning upon the gifts of God which, in His grace, He magnanimously gave to man. Another time it demands boundless preservation of health and seeks, under pretense of being an instrument of God, only its own good and its own comfort. At times it surrounds itself, under wonderfully fine disguises, with the semblance of goodness; and finally it clings with a remarkable tenacity in all things to its own judgment and its own preconceived opinion, of which the roots have formed deep within it. All these are expressions of self-love, and it is impossible, before they are overcome, that man ever reach the height of perfect contemplation, the highest bliss of loving reunion and the exalted throne of spiritual peace.

THE PRESENCE IN THE SHRINE

By Sister Daya

There is a Presence in the shrine,
It moves with noiseless tread;
But oh, Its feet are shining,
And a flame burns round Its head.
Sometimes It sits in silence
And God is all around;
Sometimes It sings a blissful song
And God is in the sound;
Sometimes It seems to leave the shrine,
We hear the high doors close;
But when we linger on in prayer
A constant blessing flows.
I know that It is always there,
Divine, enrapt, apart,—
That blessed Presence in the shrine,
The shrine within my heart.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(The introduction appeared in July, 1924. Subsequent chapters in successive numbers.)

X

CENTRE IN WASHINGTON

The Centre in Washington may be said to have been brought into existence by the raw chill winds of Boston. When Swami began his second season in Boston he was constantly hampered in his public speaking by a cough and hoarseness. The hardships of the previous winter and continual exposure in going about to so many widely separated classes and lectures had left their mark upon his constitution and he was strongly advised not to spend the winter in the harsh climate of New England. Washington had always seemed to him an especially favorable place for a Centre because of its cosmopolitan, non-commercial character; the climate also was mild, so he determined to shift his activities there. I had returned from India in the late autumn, a devoted friend of the work from New York joined us and together we started southward. The search for suitable quarters for the work was a weary one. We had carried a letter of introduction to the friend of a friend; we also had one or two acquaintances, and they all did what they could to help us; but the conditions were peculiarly trying. When we found a house that from the exterior looked possible, the key was always at the agent's office downtown. When we had procured it, the interior did not suit our purpose and a half day had been wasted.

This went on for two weeks. We were almost at the point of abandoning further effort, when the Swami said to me as we set out on a last attempt: "I have prayed very hard and a strong impression has come to me that this afternoon we shall find the right place and there will be

some one there to show it to us." We had meant to take the first street through to the car line, but in talking we passed it by and took the second. We had gone nearly the full length of a long block when we saw a house for rent. A boy was just putting the key in the door. We asked him to let us see it. It was exactly what we wanted and the next day we signed the lease. It was on Kalorama Road, and the people in India always believed that we had renamed the street; for Kalo is a descriptive Sanskrit name for Krishna, Rama the name of another divine manifestation; the two together make Krishnarama, or reversed, Ramakrishna, the name of the great teacher who founded the religious Order to which the Swami belongs. It is suggestive and interesting to find so striking a similarity between an old North American Indian name and the compound of two ancient Indo-Aryan names.

The house was extraordinarily well adapted to our needs. On the third floor were three rooms and a bath, which provided the Swami with a bedroom, study and Chapel quite apart from the activities of the house. The fourth floor was used solely for storage. The second floor had another bath and three rooms for workers. The ground floor was practically all thrown together. There was no end partition between the reception room in front and the large central hall; and unusually wide sliding doors between this and the dining room, which extended across the full width of the house. It was here that we placed the platform; and looking through the stretch of space to the front, one could easily imagine it a lecture hall, with a seating capacity of one hundred and fifty. This floor was entirely renovated and also some of the other rooms; but we were anxious to take possession and while the repairs were still in progress we moved in, with five trunks and three

cots as the sum total of our furniture. One of the Swami's most efficient and faithful workers came from New York the day we moved and spent the first difficult weeks with us.

We cooked on the first floor and ate on the third. During the day the workmen were busy on the second floor and even in the kitchen while we were cooking. The furnace caused us continual disquietude. None of us had had experience with furnaces and we were constantly afraid it would go out. Swami would get up at five, go down and peer in to see if the fire was still burning; one of the workers, unaware of this early visit, would creep down at five-thirty; another would follow at six; and at seven the colored boy, who came night and morning to stoke it, would come and rescue it from too frequent shiftings of the damper. Once when this was left open and the fire got very low, one of the workers sat up with it nearly the whole night; another hearing the ash-shaker at half past two, came down to do her share of shaking, and at three Swami was about to dress and lend a hand, when the sound of the two workers' footsteps on the uncarpeted stairs told him the crisis was over and the furnace again ablaze. After we got used to it, we took it less seriously; but we had many other inconveniences to meet. Gradually, however, we got settled and collected the bare essentials for the house-keeping. We kept, however, to the most rigid simplicity, as the Swami did not wish to root the household too deeply until we knew how the work would go.

On Christmas Day we consecrated the little Chapel on the third floor. We had hung a mediaeval embroidery, made by the monks of Salamanca, against the wall on one side of the room and placed an altar before it. The air was sweet with the fragrance of incense and the perfume of flowers and blooming plants; the Swami lost himself in

the joy of chanting holy texts or in meditating; and although there were only three present, the Service was a long and impressive one. The Swami offered the new work to the Lord with all the burning fervour of his pure heart and invoked divine blessing on it. From that moment there seemed to come a new Presence in the house, a Presence which the noise of painters, carpenters and plasterers could not obscure. We had tried to observe habitual hours of prayer from the time we moved in, but they were frequently cut short or disturbed by the prevailing confusion; now that there was a place set apart, there was regular worship in the morning, at noon and in the evening. It created a wonderful atmosphere. Every one who crossed the threshold felt and spoke of it. A letter to the Swami refers to it thus: "I always think of the meetings at the Vedanta House in Washington as bringing to me what I had been long needing—a spiritual conception of the meaning of life and its realities. The atmosphere of those rooms brought me even more than did the words I heard. I have not felt that atmosphere in any other place; it affected me deeply and made me quite speechless when I wanted to say how much you had helped me." What the writer sensed was the subtle, permeating influence of that upper chamber dedicated to worship and prayer, and watched over with ardour of devotion by the Swami. It made the nascent work strong and vibrant even before the meetings began.

While the workmen were finishing, circulars were printed, folding chairs bought, together with other indispensable furniture, a platform was made, and on the first Sunday in January it was possible to hold the first public meeting. We had put announcements in the church notices of the different papers and friends had told their friends; this was the extent of the effort to make it known,

yet the response was remarkable. The attendance was excellent and every one was most appreciative of the Swami's lecture. Two mid-week classes were started, but the growth of these was slower. The evening is always a busy time in Washington and people were seldom free. In a short time, however, an earnest nucleus was formed and after that the attendance increased steadily. Later in January a large reception was given for the Swami by the Oriental Esoteric Centre. He also delivered a lecture there before a numerous gathering, and this rebounded on the work bringing many more to the new Centre.

There was every reason to feel hopeful, but the Swami's heart was still half in Boston. He was sincerely interested in the Washington work, but he was also reluctant to throw away all the strenuous effort of the previous season in Boston. He had put so much of himself into it, it was not easy to withdraw; and people were constantly writing, pleading with him to return. Finally he decided to go back, look over the ground once more and determine what to do, leaving me to take care of the work in Washington. He started for Boston early in April. From New York he wrote: "Try to build up the work. What you are doing now, do everything in His Name, then you will be always safe and irresistible. Do not have any thought that the Washington work is only temporary. It has all been done through His Will and for some purpose. Tuesday morning I leave for Boston at ten o'clock."

Later came this word: "Have the meetings continue as long as you think best, and tell all our friends not to get discouraged. I shall be very glad to come there every season if they really want the teaching and make it possible." This was followed by the more definite instructions: "Please go on with the meetings until the third of

July anyway. Then we will see. You understand it is very important, a work which is so young must be given all possible care to make it strong. As long as people are so eager for the teaching in Washington it will be a mistake to close the work, when the weather remains so cool, do you not think so? Work is young and it ought to be protected by all means. Serve the Lord and His work; He will take care of the rest. I shall write to you soon again more fully. In the meantime go on with the services and classes with wholeheartedness. We get such strength when we do the Lord's work faithfully."

And in a subsequent letter: "Our duty is to harmonize, sympathize and never antagonize. Sometimes it may take long to make people understand a great ideal. But patience, perseverance and love conquer everything in the end. It is good to give people joy and happiness, but it is infinitely greater to help people through light of understanding; because light of wisdom saves one from many rounds of births, and gives eternal bliss. All are His children and everybody is dear to Him."

Another passage gives this unexpected glimpse of what was passing through the Swami's mind: "Swami Ramakrishnananda's letter is very good. He speaks mostly of the suffering one has to go through who undertakes any noble work; how the world misunderstands him and misinterprets everything he does. Then he says: 'Do not pay any attention to what people say, but do your duty. Great souls never find any comfort in this world. Only selfish people seek for such things.' It is a nice letter. Mr. N's letter has made me so homesick for India, I hardly can resist it; but I am ready to serve Him with my whole heart, body and soul, if He will only show me the right way."

The Swami holds and has always held his work and his workers up to the loftiest standard of undeviating consecration; but he invariably chooses the heaviest burden for himself, and his solicitude for each one who shares in his work is tender and constant. It found expression in such words as these, written to me in Washington after hearing that I was feeling the after-effects of an attack of fever in India: "I hope you are feeling well and strong, full of life and light, like a true devotee, free from all pain and depression. Do you know what intense joy it is to the Lord to have you bravely do this noble work? May you be blessed more and more every day in unselfishness, happiness and love infinite, is my constant prayer for you. My prayers are also for your health, your eyes and every bit of you which have all been offered unto Him for His service. Therefore they are all holy and should be treated so. All blessings on you and all Divine Love surround you." "Everything will come right through Divine Mother's Grace. Feel blessed that She has chosen you to serve Her. God bless you and make you a stronger instrument every day is my constant prayer." "Divine Mother protects you always and may my prayers always bring you joy and blessing."

In another letter were these words: "In Him must we trust and look to none else, to none else. Our faith in Him and love for Him must make us immovable. Impatience, planning or other human effort is not characteristic of a true devotee. The Lord is our Guide and we must get all our support from Him. In the face of all difficulties we must look to Him for peace and understanding. True devotees only are fearless and all-blissful; no one can be fearless who has a doubting mind. Everything goes well when we feel His Presence. He is the Sun, the Dispeller

of all darkness and all clouds of sorrow. What is there to fear in this world so long as we do not forget Him, being led away by worldly thoughts. Be a true devotee, full of cheer, full of hope, full of godly powers."

As the time to close the meetings for the season approached, the question arose whether the Centre in Washington should continue. The work in Boston was well started again and was moving forward briskly. The Swami had apparently committed himself to remain there, and was it then wise to go on in Washington? When the uncertainty was most acute came this letter: "Now I am going to write something which has come very strongly over me since this morning, a strong feeling against breaking up the Washington Centre; and I am going to suggest the various thoughts that have come to me. Through your help and willingness I think Washington work can be continued. Our work there has been most successful; there is no reason for breaking it up. You see I can come there in autumn and stay until the end of October; then you can carry it until the end of February; then I can again come and stay until April and you may come here for a little while. Of course the only question is whether it is advisable to keep the present house or not. We can take a smaller house in a more central part. I think the Lord will be pleased if we carry on His work even at a little sacrifice of our personal pleasure.

"I will give you in detail the idea that has come to me. Suppose I go to Washington in early September and open the work on September 11th and continue till October 23d; that will give six Sundays, six Wednesdays and six Fridays. Then I come here to resume Boston work and I will have two Sundays in October, all November, December and January; then back to Washington in February and stay

until perhaps the middle of April. You can come here for a while and give some talks and I can give a spring course in Boston and close by the middle of June. You can think about it. The Lord will bring help whenever it is needed. If you approve of this, you can call a meeting and decide plans for next fall. I can write a letter to be read at the meeting. We must do it now when the interest is alive. I do not think the work will suffer for lack of funds. I know everything will come right through His Grace. All these strong feelings have also come from Him. Whom do we need when we have Him in our hearts? No fear. We must work boldly, having full faith in Him the Lord. Tell all sincere friends who are truly interested to put their shoulders together and make it a success."

Swami came from Boston to Washington in June for a few days only. A meeting was called, a number responded and a keen desire to keep the Centre was shown. One of the members suggested a subscription list and at once enough was subscribed to allay any doubt regarding the financial status of the work. Many warm tributes were paid to it and to the Swami, and he was deeply gratified with the spirit of enthusiasm manifested. "The idea of keeping the Washington Centre has made me very happy and I am sure it has come from Him" was his comment in a letter after his return to Boston.

(To be continued.)

Life is a mighty drama enacted on the theatre of infinitude, with suns for lamps and Eternity as a background; whose author is God and whose purport and thousandfold moral lead us to the "dark with excess of light" of the throne of God.—*Carlyle*.

DEDICATION OF OPEN-AIR TEMPLE

On April 26th Ananda-Ashrama celebrated its second birthday anniversary. Swami Paramananda desired that something special and beautiful should mark the day; so very quietly he prepared a lovely surprise. The Sierra Madre mountains hold many a secret in their maternal arms and one of these secrets they shared with the Swami. Within a stone's throw of Ashrama Cloister lies an unsuspected fairyland, cool with the coolness of great trees, oaks and sycamores, and shut in on all sides by the sage covered hills. At this season of the year tall masses of violet-tinted canyon lupin lend soft color to its vistas, and shy wild birds break its silence with their calls. To transform this hidden sanctuary into an open-air temple had been one of the Swami's dreams from the first. But there were difficulties: the ways to it were blocked with tangled masses of brush, its walls were steep and its floor narrow; a dry stream bed which might carry water in the rainy season, cut through the centre of it. The dream persisted, however, and the Swami's dreams have a way of finding their fulfillment.

One day, ten days before the anniversary, the Swami innocently asked for two strong workers to go with him up the canyon and help clear out some poison oak. The next day they vanished in the same direction and the next day and the next. More helpers were called till on the ninth day the canyon was fairly humming with activity. The following morning those who came to attend the first Service at eleven o'clock, were amazed to see a fine new trail leading up the canyon where a few days before had been an impenetrable wall of growth. Over the entrance to the trail hung a rustic sign reading: Open-Air Temple. They were told that there the Service was to be held. Little did

they dream as they followed the turns of the trail up its easy grade, what a transformation had been wrought through the inspiration and under the personal guidance of the Swami. All they knew was that a great peace lay about them filling their hearts with a sense of sanctity as they approached the spacious natural temple with its roof of sky and its walls of greenery. The opening words of the Swami's poem, "Holy Sanctuary," which is sung at every Sunday Service, may have passed through their minds: "In solitude's inmost stillness there is a sacred shrine"; and as their feet moved silently over the carpet of fallen leaves, they may have recalled its closing lines, "Nor can one enter there whose footsteps are heavy and hard." Seated on redwood benches made for the occasion, they looked upon a garlanded altar and past that through fluttering leaves to the sheer cliffs beyond. There was music, human voices and the voice of birds, which blended with the silence.

It was told of the Chinese sage Huen Sha that once as he was about to begin an address a bird suddenly filled the air with song. Stepping down from his pulpit, Huen Sha remarked that the sermon had been preached. Those that came to the birthday Services, morning and afternoon, were glad that the Swami did not follow the example of Huen Sha, but rather conveyed to them the meaning in the bird songs, the rhythm of the silence, the divinity in Nature which he called "an undiluted part of God."

As on Easter, luncheon was served at the Guest Canyon for those who wished to attend both Services. Many remained and many more came in the afternoon. The new Temple was filled to over-flowing. There were few who failed to feel a healing balm, a deep sense of benediction, an abiding Presence. The second anniversary was thus a blessed day.

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Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tyndall.

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WISDOM OF THE UPANISHADS

By Swami Paramananda

(Class Lecture at Ananda-Ashrama.)



WHAT are the Upanishads? Upanishads are the highest revelation of Indo-Aryan genius. They are India's immortal heritage. One of the names given to them is *Aranyakas* or Forest Books, which means that the thoughts set forth in these books were realized by consecrated seekers after Truth in the serene silence of some forest hermitage or in the unperturbed depths of majestic Himalayan mountains. It is very significant that I should take up this study here in our retreat, and should feel specially inclined to give lessons from the Upanishads. Their wisdom is not limited by any means to a special time, clime or condition; and yet it seems to require a certain environment and type of intelligence, a certain aptitude of mind, before we can comprehend it or it can touch our life. A person who has the right kind of mind may come in contact with its beneficence in the street, in a crowd, or in the midst of business; but as a rule it does not happen that way. In spiritual study there are no hard and fast rules. That is one of the things perhaps very difficult for western minds to grasp. They think all they have to do is to go to a class, take down some notes, pay a certain fee, and nothing more is required for gaining knowledge.

the goal. That is the general experience of every one. The less resourceful we are, the more dependent we become on material circumstances; the less chance is there for our peace and happiness.

We may repeat this beautiful saying, commit it, try to comprehend its magnitude intellectually; but unless we can relate it to our life, it remains indefinite. Spiritual life, spiritual feelings are very subtle and delicate. There are certain flowers, if you touch them, they fade away; so spiritual life is not anything that can be handled with roughness, or with cut and dried intellectuality. It is something we have to evolve, and we do this through meditation. Perhaps it is selfish for us to follow the path of wisdom and meditation, if we are capable of following it. I say "if we are capable", because we may think that meditation is a simple matter, that anybody can sit down and devote a lot of time to it; but meditation can be very deceptive. A person can meditate on a selfish subject; he can fall into a state of negation; but pure meditation—"the highest meditation" which the Upanishad speaks of—implies that all these outer things, all distractions and petty thoughts are eliminated. When this takes place, then we find our contact with the inner being; we are liberated; we know what it is to touch the Ideal; or as the devotees call it, we sit at the Feet of the Lord, the Absolute One. That is the consummation of meditation.

It is a tremendous experience and the life is altogether transformed by it. This our outgoing mind, this our long-standing habit which has made us a slave to circumstances, goes through a radical change. A person who is timid and who says he does not want to be alone, that person finds he is never alone when he turns his eyes within. A new world opens and a much more interesting world than this

chaotic, turbulent world we know now. Perhaps we should not venture such a thing. Will it make us less efficient? People are sometimes fearful to take up meditation because they do not know what it means. We are not afraid to take a bath; on the contrary we look forward to it, because it is refreshing. Even after we have had a feverish night, when we take a bath in the morning it gives us a sense of freshness; our mind is revived by it, and we feel we can make a new start. If so much we receive from a physical act of cleanliness, how much more must it mean when we have the actual sense of taking an internal, purifying bath of wisdom! It brings great stimulation to the spirit of man.

We can never attain the highest as long as we remain attached to the lowest. If we cling to small motives, then we shall never reach the Supreme. When we find the highest, however, all the lesser things come to us. People want health, they want happiness, they want success, they want peace; but these are only the fair attributes of life. For instance, bliss is the natural expression of true life and it is as inseparable from the life of the wise as fragrance from a flower. When you have reached the Highest, all these attributes will be fulfilled in your life spontaneously. If we concentrate on some definite object of desire, we do bring it to us; but also it brings with it a tremendous reaction. That is, if a person tries to follow an Ideal with a small motive to fulfill his selfish desires, he may have his dream fulfilled, but a great reaction comes with it.

Let us put away all our petty ideas. There are many things we want for our happiness and they may seem very real; but thinking on these many desires we hinder ourselves in the fulfillment of our Ideal. If instead of this, we can have discrimination enough and wisdom enough to

focus our whole being—our thought, our feeling, our aspiration—so completely that we make a point of contact and open up a new source of supply, then these lesser things also will come to us. Take a flower; when it comes to blossoming, it expresses beauty without asking for it. Every one knows it is beautiful. We are attracted even to a simple wild flower when it blossoms. It is fragrant, and because of its fragrance we are attracted to it. That is the way with our life. We want to be attractive, we want to be happy, we want many blessings; but these blessings come as a fulfillment. If we follow the law and live the life, then without having to ask for these things, they come to us. We do not have to calculate every moment: "To-day we are going to get this, and to-morrow we are going to set our mind on something else." These are very insignificant means and they bring only petty results.

We may not be capable of having the highest meditation to-day, but that must not discourage us. We do not need the highest, because the highest would be too high for us in our present state of mental evolution. When we open our eyes after sleep, if the light is too bright it hurts them, but if we open them gradually, our eyes get accustomed to the light and adapt themselves naturally. So if gradually we come in contact with the light of wisdom by simple meditation, that is the best way. Meditation gives us a sense of balance, it gives a sense of proportion. When we meditate, we are not excitable; if we are, then we are unfit for any such practice. Balance, steadfastness, these are the principal qualities in life. They are not very popular because people think they can get these suddenly; they imagine that they can buy wisdom. It is not possible. We must be willing to work for it faithfully and evolve it.

We cannot think on anything that is lofty, spiritual and

strengthening without reinforcing ourselves. "A mortal, having heard and fully grasped this, and having realized through discrimination the subtle Self, rejoices, because he has obtained that which is the Source of all joy," the Upanishad says again. In India, whenever we seek spiritual Truth, we go in search of a person who embodies it, who has realized it. If there is a God, we want to have a very definite contact with that God; and in order to have that very definite contact, we want to find some one who has made it his business to realize and embody Divinity. We do not ask for credentials,—at what university he was graduated, or how much he has studied. No, it is rather whether or not he himself possesses and radiates divine gifts. What a difference it makes. Sometimes we go to a lecture, or come in contact with a person who has a certain amount of outer culture; perhaps he can give a brilliant address; but when we come home there is no impression left. Again we come in contact with a person quite subdued, with no thought of self, no desire to make himself known, yet there is something behind him that carries. Spirituality is a living thing, and that living thing transforms the whole life and character.

I have been talking on the great classics of India, the wisdom of the Indo-Aryans. Although it means the thought and culture of a very distant time, the value of anything does not consist in its antiquity; because it is old, we must not accept it as a final authority. Whether or not it has a practical bearing on our life, how much we can bring it into our daily living, that is the main consideration. Words of wisdom written in a book or Bible may give us stimulation for the time being; they may arouse something in us; but their fulfillment can only be expected when we prove how much of them we can express through our life. Any-

thing that will give us an impetus to live and to express what is highest and noblest, whether it is from the east or from the west, from the north or from the south, whether from the past or from modern times, that should be our concern; not only should we accept it, but we should encourage its spread.

Although to-day many think they are free from superstition, and free from prejudice; yet whenever there is any glamour of mystery, people flock there, because they do not recognize that they must find all subtle knowledge through their inner life. That is the real sign of wisdom. It does not make us arrogant when we look within and find the source of an unfailing supply. On the contrary, it strengthens our consciousness and conviction. It gives us something very definite. A person blunders only when he is weak in this regard. No truly strong person ever committed a crime. No truly strong person is ever selfish or hateful. You may not agree with me. You may say: "Oh, yes, we see very strong people who are hateful and aggressive." They are not strong according to my meaning; they are very weak; because of that they are selfish, they are arrogant, they are aggressive. A strong person is subdued. He is incapable of doing harm to any one, because his lower propensities are subjugated. He is incapable of indulging in hatred or anger.

Our real strength consists not in our muscle, not in the possession of a material background, it is something that comes from the inner conviction that we are part of something other than just this flesh. It is not that we should denounce our physical life. On the contrary, we should strive to make it more efficient, more helpful to ourselves and others. If however we can bring something in addition to the consciousness of the physical, if we can feel that we

are something other than just what we imagine ourselves to be, that we have a spiritual aspect, we gain new power. A man who goes into the world to do his duty, if he does not confine his consciousness and his inspiration only to the physical, but feels he is led, that there is a Power that is using him, if he can actually feel that Power which we call God, it is a tremendous thing. This is what makes us unfailing, unerring.

No person, no matter how gifted he is, can ever come to such a point that he is self-sufficient. When we think we are self-sufficient, that is the beginning of our downfall; that is when we stumble. The more we know and the more we are capable of expressing that Infinite, Absolute One, the more humble we grow. A tree that bears fruit in abundance bends down its head as if to give a symbolic expression of what humility is. A tree that does not bear any fruit is stiff and unlovely. The same way it is with our life. People who have made their life productive, they are humble, gentle, loving and lovable. Those who have accomplished very little are full of arrogance, of dissonance and harshness.

There is no one who is so base that he cannot lift up his head and say, "Yes, I am part of that Infinite One." If we are not capable of lifting up our head to that Supreme Ideal and of drawing our inspiration from it, then there is something wrong in our consciousness. It is not enough for a person to profess a religion. The ideals of that religion must become living in our consciousness. We must manifest it, carry it in our thought and unfold it in our action. We must let our whole life be the testimony of our faith. We cannot expect to transform this world, we cannot change everybody's mode of thought or life, but we can change our own life for the better, making a happier one.

We can radiate what is beneficent. Our first concern should be unfoldment from within, but we cannot do this without influencing the world. No person can be better or happier or wiser without making this world better and happier. When we fail to do this, we impoverish ourselves and we have less to give. We owe this to ourselves, to those whom we call our own and to the greater world. A person imagines that if he enslaves himself, if he labors in the field of the world and earns money, he is giving happiness to his family; but it requires something more than that. What we need to give happiness is balance, understanding, stability; and these come from inner spiritual resourcefulness, not from outside.

The Upanishads give the vision of a larger life, a greater humanity. They hold before us the higher vision as the working hypothesis for our every-day life. How can we realize this broader view? We must create an atmosphere—not merely talk about a greater humanity; we must live it, live it with the spirit of love, tolerance and practical spirituality. I do not mean we should sit down and meditate and do nothing. No. Our life should be so well shaped that it has all aspects unfolded—action, inspiration, love. When our life is imbued with these qualities, then we realize that subtle One “hidden in the cave of our heart,” and we rejoice because we have “obtained That which is the Source of all joy.”

O Breath reviving! Breath of the grace of God,
One Breath came, touched us, and passed away,
Soon He send another; keep awake, aware!
Lest of gracious breathings thou shouldst miss
thy share.

Jalaluddin Rumi.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

The entire realm of action ends in wisdom. Learn this by reverence, by enquiry and by humble service. Those men of wisdom, who have realized the Truth, will teach thee supreme wisdom.—*Bhagavad-Gita*.

He who is favored with divine grace becomes worthy of our homage and respect, as having adorned and raised up the equality of our nature by the participation he has gained with what is most excellent.—*Hierocles*.

He who is a thief of his own thoughts does not accomplish anything. How canst thou see God when thy whole heart and soul do not long for Him? . . . In God, who is Indivisible Ever-Existing Bliss, there is a consolidation of all happiness and of all pleasures. They who enjoy Him can find no attraction in the hollow pleasures of the world.—*Sri Ramakrishna*.

He alone is God who can never be sought in vain; not even when He cannot be found.—*St. Bernard*.

Man at his birth is tender and weak; at his death he is rigid and strong. Plants and trees when they come forth are tender and crisp; when dead, they are dry and tough. Thus rigidity and hardness are the concomitants of death; softness and tenderness are the concomitants of life.—*Chinese Teaching*.

Simplicity of intention collects the dispersed powers of the soul into unity of spirit, and unites the spirit itself to God. It is simplicity of intention which honours and praises God, which offers and presents our virtues to Him; thus entering into and overstepping itself and all creatures, the soul finds God in its own depths.—*John Ruysbroeck*.

Didst thou ever descry a glorious eternity in a winged moment of time? Didst thou ever see a bright infinite in the narrow point of an object? Then thou knowest what spirit means—that spire top whither all things ascend harmoniously,—where they meet and sit connected in an unfathomed depth of life.—*Peter Sterry, English Platonist 17th Century.*

O grace abundant, by which I presumed to fix my gaze through the eternal Light so far that I consumed my power of vision therein!

Within its depths I saw contained, bound by love into one volume, what is dispersed in leaves throughout the universe.—*Dante. Il Paradiso.*

PRAYER

By St. Francis de Sales

O my God! We lose nothing by serving Thee, nothing is a burden in Thy service, pain itself is as it were a recompense.

Great God, Who seest the bottom of our souls, illuminate us with so clear a light, that we shall advance straight towards Thee, without turning aside.

Let us give ourselves to God, O my soul; entirely and without reserve! Let us not be numbered amongst those servants who give the bark and not the tree!

May my heart and my lips praise Thee, O great God! May my body, my senses, and all the powers of my soul act only for Thee! May my will be free only to go to Thee! May there be nothing in me which does not glorify Thee!

The well of life is love, and he who dwelleth not in love is dead.—*John Tauler.*

BEATIFIC VISION

By Dom Anscar Vonier

The Beatific Vision is the direct result of all the acts of our higher life here on earth. We are not made spiritual through pious imagery, but through the assimilation of simple, but far-reaching principles. The Vision of God, as the term implies, is the seeing of God not with bodily eyes of course, but with the mind. The main idea conveyed by the term "vision" is this: It is God as it is in Himself, Who is seen in the mind; it is not a mere image of Him, a mere idea of Him however clear; it is Himself. It is a direct uninterrupted gazing on God's beauty. . . .

God has many ways of making the created mind know Him; but all ways fall short of the Beatific Vision. According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, God Himself becomes the idea which is in the mind of the elect. We clearly see our idea of a thing is not the thing itself. Here is no such idea of God as distinct from God to stand for God, in my mind. God's very nature is the idea. In fact God has to be the idea for nothing could ever do duty for God Himself in my mind. If I am to know Him as He is He must be Himself the idea that makes my mind a knowing mind. God alone has the power of being personally within a created mind which power God makes use of in the Beatific Vision.

Thoughts grow higher and higher and the thoughts of God are getting purer and purer on the summits, but they are mere thoughts of God.

The Beatific Vision is that of the totality of God. We can behold the infinity of God though we do not behold that infinity, with intellectual keenness. But what is necessary, in God can be seen His attributes of mercy, justice, sanctity and goodness. The act of the Beatific Vision alone is above the division of time, and has a stability far superior to that of the Light.

TAO-TEH KING AND VEDIC SCRIPTURES

Parallel Passages

The Tao (Divine Way) that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging Name. . . . Conceived of as having no name, It is the Originator of heaven and earth; conceived of as having a name, It is the Mother of all things. . . . Under these two aspects It is really the same, but as development takes place, It receives the different names. Together we call them the Mystery.—*Tao-Teh King*.

No one has grasped Him above, or across, or in the middle. There is no image of Him whose Name is Great Glory.—*Svetasvatara-Upanishad*.

He is not apprehended by the eye, nor by speech, nor by the other senses, nor by penance or good works.—*Mundaka-Upanishad*.

There the eye does not go, nor speech, nor mind. We do not know That; we do not understand how It can be taught. It is distinct from the known and also It is beyond the unknown. . . . That which speech does not illumine, but which illumines speech; know That alone to be the *Brahman* (the Supreme) not this which people worship here.—*Kena-Upanishad*.

Always without desire we must be found, if Its deep mystery we would sound; but if desire always within us be, Its outer fringe is all that we shall see.—*Tao-Teh-King*.

He who is free from desire and free from grief, with mind and senses tranquil, beholds the glory of the *Atman* (the Self).—*Katha-Upanishad*.

We look at It and we do not see It, and we name It "the Equable". We listen to It and we do not hear It, and we

name It "the Inaudible". We try to grasp It and we do not get hold of It, and we name It "the Subtle". With these three qualities It cannot be made the subject of description; and hence we blend them together and obtain the One. . . . There was something undefined and complete, coming into existence before heaven and earth. How still It was and formless, standing alone and undergoing no change, reaching everywhere and in no danger of being exhausted. It may be regarded as the Mother of all things. . . . Its upper part is not bright, and Its lower part is not obscure. Ceaseless in Its action, It yet cannot be named, and then again It returns and becomes nothing.—*Tao-Teh King*.

Grasping without hands, hasting without feet, He sees without eyes, He hears without ears. He knows what can be known, but no one knows Him; they call Him the first, the great Person.—*Svetasvatara-Upanishad*.

That One though motionless is swifter than the mind. The senses can never overtake It, for It ever goes before. Though immovable, It travels faster than those who run. By It the all-pervading air sustains all living beings. It moves and It moves not. It is far and also It is near. It is within and also It is without all this.—*Isa-Upanishad*.

It shines through the functions of the senses, and yet It is without senses; unattached, yet It sustains all; devoid of qualities, yet It is the experiencer of qualities. It exists within and without all beings; It is unmoving as well as moving, incomprehensible because of Its subtlety; It is far and also near. . . . It is the Light of lights and is said to be beyond darkness.—*Bhagavad-Gita*.

He who knows the Tao does not care to speak about It; He who is ever ready to speak about It, does not know It.—*Tao-Teh King*.

He who thinks he knows It not, knows It. He who thinks he knows It, knows It not.—*Kena-Upanishad*.

All-pervading is the great Tao! It may be found on the left hand and on the right.—*Tao-Teh King*.

That immortal *Brahman* (Supreme) is before, that *Brahman* is behind, that *Brahman* is to the right and to the left; that *Brahman* extends above and below. The supreme *Brahman* alone is the whole universe.—*Mundaka-Upanishad*.

TO THE LIVING GOD

By Marion F. Gilmore

Thou living God of Love I cry to Thee!
In the still night I feel Thy presence near,
In the hushed dark I know Thy presence here,
Within, around me, Sacred Mystery!

Thou art my Life—I have no life but Thine;
Thou art my Health—I have no health but Thee;
Thou art my Joy—no happiness can be
Unless it flow from Thee, Thou Joy divine!

Thou art my fount of Love, Thou Love indeed,
Which cannot fail nor ever pass away;
Thou art my Law—oh! help me to obey!
Thou art fulfillment, Lord, of every need.

So in the quiet night I call to Thee—
“Speak, Lord,—Thy servant heareth!” and I feel
Thy Spirit, deep within me, strengthen, heal,
And hear Thy silent voice reply to me.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(The introduction appeared in July, 1924. Subsequent chapters in successive numbers.)

CHAP. X

CENTRE IN WASHINGTON — Concluded

The schedule formulated in the spring was put into effect in the autumn and the Swami went to Washington the second week of September, leaving me at the Boston Centre. He wrote on arriving: "I am here all safe. Mr. B. was waiting for me at the station. He received me most cordially and brought me here in a taxi. He took the reading notices to the papers with great pleasure and will attend to them regularly. He has informed all his friends already. This is certainly a beautiful house." The Swami resumed the meetings at once and everything began well, but the large house seemed to overweight the daily life of the two or three workers who shared in its care, and a change was considered. "I have been thinking much about the house problem," the Swami wrote. "I hope through the Lord's Grace everything will come all right."

Before the end of the month a decision was made to transfer the work to an apartment in Iowa Circle, which was much nearer to the centre of the city. Around a pretty central park stood a number of imposing dwellings and one of them had been converted into apartments. It was here that we moved the Centre. It required some effort to secure the apartment. The owner was an orthodox churchman, one of the pillars of the Church of the Epiphany. He looked askance at what seemed to him a heathen faith, but he was won over by the Swami. His attitude of mind was soon so completely altered that when a tenant objected to public meetings in the house he offered to cancel her lease. By the end of the year he was the Swami's staunch friend and on hearing that he was giving up the apartment he

wrote two full foolscap pages with his own hand urging the agent to do his utmost to keep the Centre. "Give them whatever they want," the letter ran. "I don't know anything about the Swami's religion, but it must be a good one to make him what he is. He is one of the nicest tenants I have ever had. Every one else who comes into the office does nothing but kick, but he has always been satisfied with everything. He has never spoken a word of complaint. Keep him if you can."

The new apartment provided a seating capacity almost as great as that of the house in Kalorama Road. The rooms were large and high-studded. In the front room nearly one hundred chairs could be placed, and the adjoining library held half as many more. Next to the main room was a smaller one which seemed as if made for a Chapel, with a leaded glass window at the end. The Swami moved in on the eighteenth of October. At the end of the week, after holding the first Sunday's meeting in the new quarters, he returned to Boston. He came again at Christmas time and it was during this visit he established his custom of giving a large annual dinner to members, for which he himself prepares all the dishes. He began by asking a few, then the few multiplied into many, until nearly forty were invited. We were ill equipped to entertain so large a number and the time was short; but a worker from New York who had come for the holidays hurried down town and bought plates, glasses, forks and several large cooking pots. The preparations occupied the whole day, but the dinner was a great success; and when Swami went back to Boston he immediately gave one for the members and friends there.

During the winter of 1911 and 1912, the work went on encouragingly; although wind, rain and snow caused occa-

sional fluctuations in the numbers at the meetings, for the Washington public is very subservient to weather. I remember one night when a storm was raging outside and only three came to the Wednesday evening Class. Two sat on the front row and, exhausted perhaps by the battle with the elements, slept quietly, except for an occasional forward start to catch a sliding purse. The third one, still a faithful friend, sat on the very last row wide awake. I talked to her about the Upanishads for an hour, while she smiled and nodded assent to all I said. Then the others woke up, we had the closing meditation and the class ended. But this did not happen when the Swami was there. People braved storm and cold to hear him and kept alert and intent while he spoke.

The Centre made rapid progress when he came to Washington in February and remained for ten weeks, sending me to Boston to hold the meetings there. The large front room and library were often crowded and he was obliged to provide more seats. The members had time and opportunity to catch his spirit and also to come into closer personal touch with him, for he did his own housekeeping and he was glad for all the friendly help that came. His letters written at this time contained graphic and ingenious accounts of his daily domestic round. "It is nearly three o'clock now and I am just through my dinner and washing the dishes," one runs. "Cooking and other little household details take more time than we like to allow. I went out for my walk about half-past eleven but I did not take so long a walk, I was back before one. I finished yesterday's cream this morning with a shredded wheat and took an egg for breakfast. Then for dinner I cooked some rice and two boiled eggs with some sauce, used all the left over cream for that; it was all in good condition (not sour). Now I

have the fresh bottle of cream and milk for supper. I did not eat anything last night but drank lemonade. I think I have given you all the details of my housekeeping. There was a little notice in the 'Star' last evening."

Other letters read: "I am just through my morning duties. The lecture room and library are quite ready for the afternoon. We had a slight snow storm here last night. I hope it will not hurt the buds. We had a very good meeting despite the storm—such nice people. Every one seemed very appreciative. It will be a great work if we can build up a strong Centre in Washington. Mrs. W. said to me last night: 'Even if the Centre should not continue here, do not think your effort has been wasted. The seeds you have sown will grow and spread.' I went through a little discouragement over the work last week. The public sometimes seems so indifferent and unresponsive, but I know nothing is impossible, through the Lord's Grace."

"It rained here yesterday and was a very dull day. I did not expect very much of a meeting but there were quite a number. It takes time to build up a Centre. It requires steady, faithful work. Mr. A. came early to arrange the chairs and he said: 'I wish I could give you hundreds of dollars a year, but I am going to do all I can to support the Centre.' Of course I told him it was not money that counted, but interest and devotion. I have received a good many presents since Saturday noon. Saturday when I was eating my dinner some one rang. I thought it was the cleaning woman; but it was a bottle of grape juice with a note from Mrs. W. She had to go to Philadelphia for two weeks. Then came Sarah with a big grape fruit and a big orange from Mrs. M. In the evening Mrs. C. and her daughter called to see me with some apples and oranges and some almond wafers. After they had left and I had finished

my supper, some one else appeared bringing me some fruit salad and nice pink roses. Another member brought some very beautiful pink rose buds when she came to the evening lecture."

With a flash of playfulness he begins one letter: "Behold a gray hair! I found one this morning. Well, people do not realize how old I am." Then he continues: "I am just through all my morning household work. The plants are watered; library, bedroom are all in order and tidy. Now it is about a quarter to eleven. I was a little late in starting. You will be glad to hear the meeting last night went off nicely, all the chairs were taken and a few had to stand. Mr. A. was all full of smiles when he brought the sign up. I asked him what was the matter and he said, 'I am feeling happy over the meeting.' I think it gave them all encouragement. A number of the members stood through the whole lecture and gave their seats to strangers."

"It is just ten and I am nearly through all my duties. I began a little early. This morning it was gloomy but now the sun has come out in its full glory. I did not see any one yesterday, it hailed and rained all day and was very disagreeable. I went to the market in the morning and bought some vegetables for fifteen cents and some butter. I am eating well and everything is going well with me. It takes some time to get adjusted to these conditions. But I am growing quite used to the life here. People have shown great concern regarding my comfort. I am always glad to hear that the work is going on well in Boston." Then with a sudden turn to deeper thought, which comes so frequently in his letters, he adds: "The secret in serving a noble cause is to overcome all thoughts of credit and discredit; they are very, very limiting; also to rise above thoughts of suc-

cess and failure. Through constant service, through love and devotion and through the Lord's Grace we become endowed with all noble virtues. Do not ever forget that we must be genuine. Those who serve Him truly, no harm can come to them. It is the greatest thing in life to be able to dedicate our lives to Him and to be used by Him as He wills. This is true freedom and peace."

The Swami's time was not filled wholly with housekeeping and the Centre's lectures and classes. He was asked to speak before many different organizations. Among the important invitations he received was one to deliver a lecture at the Cosmos Club, one of the most exclusive and most intellectual clubs of Washington.

The Swami returned to Boston in April and in July he sailed unexpectedly for India. In September he was still absent and he had requested me to take care of the Boston work until his return. No date had been set for that. It seemed unwise to renew the heavy lease of the apartment, so it was decided to suspend the meetings for a time and store the furniture. Scarcely had this decision been reached when a delayed letter came from the Swami instructing us to do this. Evidently his thought had travelled faster than the mail.

Before dismantling the apartment, we had a three weeks' course of classes and lectures. It was not easy to carry the news to Washington that the work was to be closed, for all the members had begged so earnestly to have it continue. Swami himself had written in the spring: "We had a nice class and after the meditation we talked about the Centre. It makes me sad to see the way Mr. A. and others suffer at the very idea of giving it up. We shall see and whatever the Lord wills will be best for all. We shall have to do as it comes from Him." At the time it seemed only a

temporary suspension. The Swami however returned from India with such enlarged ideas for the development of the Boston Centre that it became necessary to concentrate all effort there and convert the Washington work into a branch of the Centre in Boston, with a shorter season of lectures and classes.

The work went on in this way for some time, until the war created such abnormal conditions in Washington that it was no longer possible to continue the meetings and they were given up altogether. There still remains, however, a group of devout, loyal members who through the "Message of the East", the Swami's books and an occasional letter keep in touch with both teacher and teaching, and by their devotion and earnest living keep the spirit of the Centre alive and helpful to the world.

(To be continued.)

DEDICATION SERVICE

The dedication of the new home and chapel-auditorium of the Vedanta Centre of Boston on the 7th of June, marked a new day in the history of the Boston work. In the minds of many who have cherished the Centre and followed every step of its growth with keen interest there had been much speculation. Was this move to be a growth? Was this new home at 176 Marlboro Street to maintain the dignity and prestige of the old, or was it to become merely a small branch of the main work now unfolding at Ananda-Ashrama? Their questions were answered the day of the dedication, as they stepped into the spacious auditorium, for they found it more imposing and commodious than the lovely chapel at 1 Queensberry Street, the home of the Centre for the past twelve years. Swami Paramananda came on from California to conduct the Dedication Services. In spite of a terrific heat wave the three Services were

very well attended and no outer conditions could mar the pure and universal spirit of the Swami's message which has already filled the new place with the same rare atmosphere of sanctity which was so palpable in the former home.

The following Tuesday an informal reception was held. Although it was arranged on very short notice many friends came to admire and to rejoice. For they find that the Boston work has taken a real step forward. The new Centre is remarkably accessible, being close to Copley Square, the very centre of Boston life. It is a neighbourhood peculiarly friendly to the student for the famous Boston Public Library is but a short walk away. As a result, an ever-increasing number drop in at the Centre in the afternoon for study, rest and refreshment.

RHYTHM OF LIFE

On the evening of June 19th, the Eastern Culture Club gave a reception at the Vedanta Centre of Boston, 176 Marlboro Street, in honour of the "Rhythm of Life", Swami Paramananda's latest book of poems. This makes the third volume of poetry from the Swami's pen. These poems contain for many the very essence of his teaching, conveyed through the medium of pure beauty of expression, a beauty that is brought out very poignantly when the Swami himself reads the poems as he did on this occasion. Each volume has its champions, but all are agreed that it is impossible to place one higher than the other, for the same inspiration runs through all. The Foreword to the "Rhythm of Life" is written by Mr. Carleton Noyes, Cambridge scholar and author, a well-known authority on Walt Whitman. Mr. Noyes pays high and sincere tribute: "A book of devotion," he says, "inspired and inspiring, of spiritual vision and divine communion, Rhythm of Life is an experience and a prayer."

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



OCTOBER, 1925

LIVINGNESS OF LIFE

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"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tyndall.

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OCTOBER, 1925

No. 8

NATURE'S SANCTUARY

By Swami Paramananda



S I roam in this, my Nature's sanctuary,
Fragrant with perfumed breath,
Shining with living radiance of beauty,
Sacred by its own virtue,
Bestowing beneficence,
Awakening life and ecstasy,
Asking naught yet giving all to its
votaries,
Where would I seek God if I find Him
not here?
My body, bend thou now and sing thy song
of holy humility.
My heart, rejoice!
Here is enshrined the Maker of all beauty.
My soul, now is the hour of thy fulfillment.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

—*Jesus the Christ.*

It is not enough to be a member of the Church, one must also be a member of Christ. . . . I once picked a stone out of a pool and broke it. About six or seven inches of it were wet, but inside and in the centre that stone was quite dry. That stone was in the water, but the water was not in the stone. It is the same with men. Some in the Christian Church know a great deal about Him, but the centre of their heart is dry. Christ is not in their hearts.

—*Sadhu Sundar Singh.*

O beloved Pan, and ye other gods of this place, grant me to become beautiful in the inner man, and that whatever outward things I may have may be at peace with these within. May I think the wise man to be rich, and may I have as much wealth as a wise man can employ usefully and prudently. Do we need anything else, Phaedrus? For myself I have prayed enough.—*Plato.*

Homage to thee, O thou who art Re when thou risest, and Tem when thou settest in beauty. . . . The gods of the south and of the north, of the west and of the east, praise thee, O thou divine substance from whom all forms of life come into being. Thou sendest forth the word and the earth is flooded with silence, O thou only One, who didst dwell in heaven before ever the earth and the mountains came into existence. O Runner, O Lord, O only One, thou maker of things which are—let me snuff the air which cometh forth from thy nostrils, and the north wind which cometh forth from thy mother Nut. Oh, make thou to be glorious my shining form, O Osiris, make thou to be divine my soul!—*Egyptian Book of the Dead.*

LIVINGNESS OF LIFE

By Swami Paramananda

(Address given at the Dedication of the Open-Air Temple at Ananda-Ashrama, Sunday Morning, April 26th, 1925)

Let us lift our thoughts and prayers to the Supreme Being of the universe. Let us make our hearts free from all alien and unworthy feelings that we may feel His Presence in our hearts, that we may find our upliftment in His Divine Presence, that we may rejoice and rest in that great Presence. May the Supreme Spirit of the universe, He Who is the Mother and Father of all living beings grant us His loving and abiding protection and keep us ever in peace.

"The true church is not a separate mass of people, not a particular sect to be pointed out with a finger, not confined to one time or one place; it is rather a spiritual and invisible body born of God, of one mind, spirit and faith, but not gathered in any one external city or place. It is a fellowship seen with the spiritual eye and by the inner man. It is the assembly and communion of all truly God-fearing, good-hearted, new-born persons in all the world, bound together by the Holy Spirit in the peace of God and the bonds of love,—a communion outside of which there is no salvation, no Christ, no God, no comprehension of Scripture, no Holy Spirit and no Gospel."

In these few lines by a mystic and seer this our simple Consecration Service probably is expressed. Ten days ago we did not know that it was going to take place, or that this place was to have a Service of such nature. Ten days ago any one coming here would not have had an easy access to this canyon. We conceive ideas and we receive our inspiration from the one Source that can give us inspiration; our consecration also must be in the name of that One, unbounded and all-pervading. A true place of wor-

ship—church or temple, whatever we may call it—should embody all the qualities of the Spirit and we know of no place more fitting for spiritual expression than a spot such as this where Nature gives us her bounty and blessing. Here we have a true temple and the only way we can dedicate it is to show our harmony of spirit with Nature. When a weary soul comes in contact with Mother Nature, she seems to absorb all the poison out of that tired heart and gives it refreshment. A tree gives its shade and shelter; the sky overhead gives us that which makes our life beautiful and bountiful. If we can sing as the birds sing, freely and fully from their depths; if we can speak with the silent whisper of the trees conveying their feelings to an unseen Spirit, then we have something which leads us to a closer contact with the Infinite. We cannot draw too close to that great unchanging Fact, and we should cultivate whatever in our life gives us that sense of closeness. Living beings become more living, more vibrant, more active and more productive when they touch this simple truth which Nature holds for us, when they come into communion with her, because Nature is a very living and undiluted part of God.

When we get into the turmoil of the cities, the man-created chaos of life, how little of Nature, how little of that which is true and unspoiled, is left for us. This means we have to create a new setting. In order to find any access to the divine realm, our efforts to break through the wall of artificiality have to be greater; but our path is made easier when we come in contact with bountiful, grand and majestic Nature. What shrine has man that is more fitting than the shrine Nature offers us, decorated wholly by trees, by their leaves, by their blossoms and fragrance, with what God's hand has created, and not by the artificiality of man. We are very blessed when we can have such a thing at

times, and I hope and pray that this, our vision in its infancy, may lay the true foundation for a larger work so that people may come and find here an atmosphere—an atmosphere of sanctity, an atmosphere that produces inspiration. For is not that the greatest part of the service we can render to humanity? But we must have this ourselves before we can extend it to others. In fact we never can give anything to any one else that we do not ourselves possess first. Spiritual life must become something very practical and definite, just as a man gives a gift. He may hand to you a flower and before you know his aim and object you are at once interested in the gift because it is beautiful, it is fragrant, it conveys something to you. Then, as you know the motive, as you feel the spirit of the giver, it becomes even more precious and full of blessing. So it is when we come in contact with the majesty, the beauty of God's creation.

My Service to you this morning is to convey if possible the vision and the spirit of consecration which we hold in our heart. A work of this type cannot be expressed so much through outer grandeur and magnificence. It is expressed rather by silent growth, by unfolding ourselves in harmony with great Nature itself. The birds are free and they sing their best when they are freest; sun gives its light when it is unobstructed; wind blows and gives its refreshing blessing when we are out in the open and benefit by it. Similarly, our souls express their best and truest, the subtlest, the most profound factor in our life, when they are freest.

There is no such thing as cut and dried religion. That is where we make our mistake. It must bring a sense of mellowness, of gentleness; it must transform. True religion changes a person's life; even his voice changes. If

we have touched even the outskirts of the spiritual realm, it brings such an influence upon us that we no longer can do anything that is out of keeping, out of tune and out of harmony with the Divine. Nature bestows upon us a tremendous blessing in this respect. As we learn to commune with her, we get closer to that One who has created this beautiful universe, and it is remarkable what healing she holds for us for all our ills. People who are fretful and sordid, harsh and cruel, they cease to be so. Nature has the most beneficent influence upon our life. Why? Because it is part of Divinity. Human beings are also part of Divinity. All living beings, everything animate and inanimate, express Divinity; but we must find a point of contact and anything that gives us the closest point of contact we must welcome and encourage. In this way we find the real meaning of worship.

These our hands and feet, mind and brain, senses of hearing, seeing and touching, and all these faculties that we possess can either misguide us or guide us to the goal. When we become conscious that we are not aloof from the centre of life, are not cut off from the Source of life, but are altogether interwoven, are altogether a part of that great Immensity, then we begin to feel a new awakening in our soul. We feel that these little hands of ours are no longer confined by the limiting adjunct of mind, but are guided by another more mighty Hand; that our little mind is incapable of doing anything that is harmful or erroneous, because it is directed by another Mind. That is the meaning of consecration. Is it too much for us to expect such a thing? No. It is the only logical and legitimate hope we can hold.

As human beings we can so limit ourselves, so entirely cut ourselves off from the infinite Source that we are over-

whelmed with our sense of limitation. We feel lonely; we feel that life is very heavy for us; we find that we are incapable of carrying it successfully. Then again through Divine Grace, when our inner eye is open, when our vision is clear, we come to the very practical ground of the livingness of life, livingness of the spiritual, livingness of religion; not the dogmatic, sectarian type of religion that we may profess in church or code, but religion that has become a vital part of our being. Every day when we go to work we feel that we are carrying something with us, that we have something to accomplish, and that what we have to do is done not only through our own whim, emotion or ambition, but that it is a definite task ordained by the Infinite Being. We can go against this and find ourselves bumping against a hard rock, or we can go with it and find that our path is made clear, that strength is given to us, that inspiration infills our soul. It is not that we wholly change our routine or our vista, that we shift our position in life, it means that all the interests we are concerned in, all the things we are doing, we do with a sense of living consecration.

We never learn to love God or love the best part of ourselves until we have this awakening which makes everything living to us. I cannot imagine any one devoid of sensitiveness and spiritual intuition becoming a lover of God or lover of Truth. The man whose inner doors are closed, whose heart is hard and harsh, lacking in gentleness and subtlety, he cannot find any access to the divine realm. I want you to carry this in your mind and remember what a place of worship means, what spirit it must invoke within us, what atmosphere it must create to become truly representative of God's sanctuary. "The true church is not a separate mass of people. . . . It is the assembly and

communion of all truly God-fearing, good-hearted, new-born persons in all the world, bound together by the Holy Spirit in the peace of God and the bonds of love." It is through love, through the sense of sanctity, through spiritual awakening that we draw close to that Infinite Spirit. When we lack these we may spend our life in a temple, or in a church, in a place that is already marked as God's dwelling, and find nothing and create nothing that is helpful to others. That these words are by a Christian mystic makes it all the more interesting. It shows that those who have risen to a height of spiritual consciousness come to the same view-point.

Narrowness, hatred, fear, jealousy, anger and envy, they all melt away before the spiritual sun just as ice melts before the sun. If we have not found that warmth which comes through spiritual awakening, we cannot be cured of coldness, calculation and worry. We may keep before our desk so we may read them every day, lines telling us that all our aspirations, whatever we do and whatever we think, should be directed Godward; yet we forget. We forget so long as small propensities are dominant in our mind and in our heart. This establishing in our consciousness a living sense of God is not merely to benefit the world. Primarily we benefit ourselves. It brings tremendous rest; it brings a great sense of upliftment for the soul to know that it is not an isolated being, full of fear, full of danger, full of uncertainty; but that we are all in His Divine Hand, constantly guided and protected. This knowledge, however, cannot be gained in any cut and dried manner. It must come from within. Every morning we rise up and at our rising, if our hearts are rightly attuned, we can feel a joyous spirit, a spirit that stills our whole being, making it vibrant with new life, that fills our mind with inspira-

tion till our thoughts are so potent we hardly touch the material ground. We all have known in our lives times when we are filled with such spiritual influx we hardly recognize that we are touching the ground. These are the moments when we are most exalted, because thought has such power over us. Then again we have thoughts and feelings which make us conscious of material life. We feel that life is so complex, so full of uncertainty, so full of defeat that it is not worth living. Put these two attitudes side by side and see their influence upon us, what they produce in us and what they produce in the world in general. We are part of this great universe—we can bring into it joyousness, sanctity and a sense of sunshine. Also we can spoil it for ourselves and for others. These are the vital thoughts for every individual to hold in his or her mind, and according to these thoughts we rise or fall.

It is no accident in life if a person carries a tremendous burden. If he feels that it is inevitable, he is mistaken. It is not his through chance and he is not going to escape it through chance either. He must learn to tune his soul with the finer forces. This he must do gradually. We cannot partake of that great Immensity suddenly. We comprehend it first mentally, then we absorb its spirit: our body lends itself, our mind lends itself to its comprehension, then our whole being becomes in tune, and that is the greatest moment in our life. It enriches our consciousness; it gives us vigor and strength for all things that we have to do in the material world, and it brings us a sense of spiritual surety. It is not in dogma or doctrine; it is not in professing or observing one custom or another. It is the outpouring of the soul; it is the unfoldment from within. We know and therefore we believe, and because we believe in the abiding Presence we become unshakable in our reso-

lution. Whatever actions we perform are stamped with real success in the spiritual sense.

Consecration is of the life. When we have consecration in our life, whatever we say, whatever we do, everything that we touch has that sanctity. Then we become instead of world-abiding, God-abiding. Now we are too conscious of material things. That is the reason we feel disturbance and unhappiness. We are often unsettled by the world's changes. When our mind is established in Godhead, when our body is established in Him, our whole being becomes part of His great consciousness; we learn little by little to do His Will and as we learn to do His Will, we find a complete change in our horizon. It does not fluctuate any more. The sun rises and sets, gloomy weather comes and goes, unhappiness appears and vanishes—all these changes pass before us and we stand, because of that great consciousness, firm, resolute and unshakable. That is the way of life, that is the way of productiveness. Whether we are absorbed in worldly interest, or free from it, whether we have many duties and obligations, or few, whatever may be the position we hold, or whatever may be our mode of living, we all need this abiding sense of sanctity, for it enlarges and enriches our entire life. Small and great, in every step we find a sustenance and a surety, and this is the sum and substance of spiritual faith and the heart of religion.

The blessed one who hath beheld the vision divine, becometh like a child, simple, open, turning his eye upon the fresh world as it is, stripped of its artificial names and formulas. Often he is intoxicated with the wine of divine love, at the sight of the revelation before him. He is one with the living fountain of holiness.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

ST. FRANCIS AND THE BIRDS

From "The Little Flowers of St. Francis"

Shortly after his conversion, the humble servant of Christ, St. Francis, having already gathered many companions and received them into the Order, stood in great anxiety and in great doubt as to that which he ought to do; whether to devote himself wholly to prayer or sometimes also to preaching; and touching that matter he desired greatly to know the will of God; and because the holy humility which was in him suffered him not to trust to himself nor to his own prayers, he bethought him to inquire of the divine will through the prayers of others; wherefore he called Friar Masseo and said: "Go thou to Sister Clare and tell her in my name that, together with certain of the most spiritual of her companions, she should devoutly pray God that He may vouchsafe to show me whether it be better that I give myself to preaching or to prayer alone. And thereafter go to Friar Sylvester and tell him to do the like." . . . Friar Masseo departed and, according to the bidding of St. Francis, did his embassy first to St. Clare and thereafter to Friar Sylvester.

Therewith Friar Masseo returned to St. Francis; and St. Francis welcomed him with very great charity, washing his feet and setting food before him. And when he had eaten, St. Francis called Masseo into the wood; and there he kneeled down before him and drew back his cowl, and making a cross of his arms, asked him: "What doth my Lord Jesus Christ bid me do?" Friar Masseo made answer: "To Friar Sylvester as to Sister Clare and to her companion, Christ hath made answer and revealed that His will is that thou go through the world to preach, because He hath not chosen thee for thyself alone but also for the salvation of others." Then St. Francis, when he had had this answer and

knew thereby the will of Jesus Christ, rose up with exceeding great fervour and said: "Let us go in the name of God;" and he took as his companions Friar Masseo and Friar Agnolo, holy men. And going with impetuosity of spirit, taking thought neither of way nor path, they came to a walled place which is called Savurniano; and St. Francis began to preach; but first he bade the swallows which were twittering to keep silence until such time as he should finish preaching; and the swallows obeyed him. . . .

And passing on, full of fervour, he lifted up his eyes and saw certain trees hard by the road, whereupon was an almost infinite number of birds; whereat St. Francis marvelled, and said to his companions: "Ye shall await me here on the road, and I will go and preach to the birds my sisters;" and he went into the field and began to preach to the birds which were upon the ground; and anon those which were in the trees came to him, and all of them stood still together until St. Francis finished preaching; and even then they departed not until he gave them his blessing; and according to that which Friar Masseo afterward related to Friar James of Massa, when St. Francis went about among them touching them with his mantle, none of them moved therefor.

Now the preaching of St. Francis was on this wise: "My sisters the birds, much are ye beholden unto God your Creator, and always and in every place ought ye to praise Him, because He hath given you liberty to fly wheresoever ye will, and hath clothed you on with twofold and threefold raiment. Moreover, He preserved your seed in the ark of Noah that your race might not be destroyed. Again, ye are beholden unto Him for the element of the air which He hath appointed for you; furthermore, ye sow not neither do ye reap; yet God feedeth you and giveth you rivers and

fountains wherefrom to drink; He giveth you mountains and valleys for your refuge, and high trees wherein to build your nests; and, in that ye know not how to sew nor spin, God clotheth you and your little ones; wherefore doth your Creator love you seeing that He giveth you so many benefits. Guard yourselves, therefore, my sisters the birds, from the sin of ingratitude and be ye ever mindful to give praise to God."

And, as St. Francis spake these words unto them, all those birds began to open their beaks, and to stretch out their necks, and to open their wings, and reverently to bow their heads even unto the ground, and to show by their motions and by their songs that the holy father gave them very great delight: and St. Francis rejoiced with them and was glad and marvelled much at so great a multitude of birds, and at the most beautiful diversity of them, and at their attention and fearlessness; for which cause he devoutly praised the Creator in them.

Finally, when he had made an end of preaching, St. Francis made over them the sign of the Cross and gave them leave to depart; whereupon all those birds rose into the air with wondrous songs; and thereafter, according to the form of the Cross which St. Francis had made over them, they divided themselves into four bands; and one band flew towards the East, and one towards the West, and one towards the South and the fourth towards the North, and each company went singing marvellous songs; signifying thereby that, even as St. Francis, the Standard-bearer of the Cross, had preached to them, and made over them the sign of the Cross, according whereunto they separated themselves toward the four quarters of the world, so the preaching of the Cross of Christ, renewed by St. Francis, was about to be carried through all the world by him and

by his friars; the which friars, like unto the birds, possess nothing of their own in this world but commit their lives wholly to the providence of God.

DRAMA IN A CLOISTER

By Sister Daya

There are certain periods in history when ignorance, superstition, cruelty and fear throw their grim shadow over the minds and hearts of men. Dark ages, truly, during which human vision is strangely distorted and there seems to be no light anywhere! These conditions come both as the result of outer circumstance and inner reaction. It is the eternal swing of light to darkness and darkness back again to light. Thus the dark ages in Europe came as a reaction from the pure fine fervour of young Christianity vibrating to the clear call of the Christ, as a reaction from the intense emotional stirring of that earlier time. Also they were due to political conditions and material threatenings which left no place of outer refuge for any man.

People can endure invasion, persecution, pressure from all sides so long as their ideal remains inviolate, so long as they have sanctuary in the Spirit. But without the vision the people perish. Europe in the tenth century had lost its true vision. Harassed by Huns, Normans and Saracens it turned in vain to the church for the inner stability which it had lost from its own soul. Rome had degenerated into a hotbed of debauchery, intrigue and licentiousness. Every man was for himself in that blackest of black centuries, in which hope, aspiration and all the nobler human qualities seemed to be dead. The whispered prophecy of the end of the world in the year ten hundred only served to add confusion to the gloom. "An iron century", writes one author, "in which the clash of steel on steel was almost dulled by

lamentations; a barren century, too despairing to create, too wretched to dream, hag-ridden by terror."

Strangest of strange things that above the din of that time one of the few voices we hear is anything but the voice of despair. It is a virile voice withal tender, dogmatic yet compassionate, fresh and fearless. It is the voice of Hrotsvitha, a Benedictine nun of the Abbey of Ganderheim in Germany, the only woman of that age whose literary achievements have survived. Fast cloistered in one of the strictest of Orders, Hrotsvitha wrote plays for her sister-nuns to act, while outside the convent walls the mad world of Europe spun to its apparent doom. A curious medium in that day for a woman, especially a religieuse, to adopt! Yet nothing could have conveyed so well the colour of the times as she saw them, and her own mental environment.

She was the author of poems and letters as well, but her comedies were her real contribution. They tell us of her gentle breeding, of a fine culture which turned equally to the pagan poets and to the New Testament; of either a wide social experience before her entrance into the convent, or a wide imagination. Humour, passion, delicacy of feeling, an ever present religious background, characterize these plays that were in no sense miracle-plays, but comedies. "Far from bewailing the vileness of earth or prophesying future ill, the infinite mercy of God was her constant theme", writes her biographer, Evangeline Wilbour Blashfield. And she adds that "In the long darkness which extended from the extinction of the classical drama to the rise of the mediaeval miracle-play, Hrotsvitha's dramas present a single luminous point." Dogmatic she no doubt was, restricted in her expression, but filled with a tender humanness and a spiritual luminosity which shines through many of her pages.

As an example of this universal spiritual quality, we have chosen her play "Abraham". In this play a pious recluse, Abraham, binds his orphaned niece and ward Mary, at the age of eight, to a life of religious renunciation. Mary, submissively, almost eagerly accepts a vocation which she does not yet grasp and, renouncing what she has not yet experienced, for twenty years lives an ascetic life in solitude in the desert. Then comes the inevitable reaction brought to its culmination by the advent of a dissolute priest. Together they flee to the city where he abandons her. In despair she takes up the life of a courtesan, not daring to seek pardon or help from her uncle. Abraham goes forth to seek Mary and finally discovers her whereabouts. Disguising himself as a soldier he goes to the house where she is staying and through amorous advances gains access to her. An odour about him suggests her former life, her former abstinence, and for a few moments she almost breaks under the burden of remorse. But Abraham diverts her mood with his wooing. Finally they are alone together and the hour has come for Abraham to unmask. He throws aside his disguise. Right here is where eternal compassion speaks through Hrotsvitha, for her treatment of this scene is far other than one would expect from a nun of the tenth century. We give it in a condensed form:

Abraham: (Aside.) It is now time to take off the hat which hides my face and to show her who I am. *(Aloud.)* O, my adopted daughter, O part of my soul, Mary, do you recognize in me the old man who brought you up with the tenderness of a father and who betrothed you to the only Son of the heavenly King?

Mary: Alas for me! It is my father and my master Abraham who speaks to me. *(She is stupefied with fear.)*

Abraham: What has happened to thee, my daughter?

Mary: A great misfortune.

Abraham: Who deceived thee? Who seduced thee?

Mary: He who overthrew our first parents.

Abraham: Where is the angelic life thou didst lead on earth?

Mary: Utterly lost.

Abraham: Where is thy virginal purity? Where is thy admirable chastity?

Mary: Lost.

Abraham: If thou dost not re-enter the way of salvation, what reward canst thou hope to receive for thy fasts, thy vigils, when falling from the height of heaven thou art drowned in the abysses of hell?

Mary: Alas!

Abraham: Why didst thou despise me? Why hast thou abandoned me? Why didst thou not tell me of thy fall?

Mary: After I fell into sin, soiled as I was, I no longer dared to approach your holiness.

Abraham: Whoever was exempt from sin except the Son of the Virgin?

Mary: No one.

Abraham: It is human to sin, it is devilish to continue to sin. Not he who falls should be blamed, but he who does not rise again at once.

Mary: Unhappy wretch that I am!

Abraham: Why art thou overcome? Why dost thou remain motionless lying on the ground? Stand up and listen to what I say to thee.

Mary: I am terror-stricken. I cannot bear the weight of your paternal rebuke.

Abraham: Think, my daughter, of my tenderness for thee and cease to fear.

Mary: I cannot.

Abraham: Was it not for thee that I left the desert and renounced the observance of discipline? Was it not for thee that I, a professed eremite, became the boon companion of debauchees? I, who for so many years have been vowed to silence, have I not bandied light jests in order not to be recognized? Why with bent head dost thou look downward? Why dost thou disdain to answer me?

Mary: The consciousness of my guilt overwhelms me. I dare not raise my eyes to heaven nor mingle my words with yours.

Abraham: Do not distrust heaven, my daughter; do not despair; rise out of this abyss of desperation and put your hope in God.

Mary: The enormity of my sins has plunged me in the deepest despair.

Abraham: Thy sins are great, but the divine grace is greater than all created things. Banish then this sadness and profit by the short time that remains to thee for repentance.

Mary: If I had the slightest hope of meriting forgiveness, I should not fail to give myself up to penitence.

Abraham: Let the toil which I have borne for thee move thee to pity, my daughter; cast aside this fatal discouragement, which is more wicked than any sin, for he who despairs of God's mercy to evil-doers commits an unpardonable transgression. As truly as the spark that darts from the pebble cannot fire the sea, the bitterness of our sins cannot alter the sweetness of the divine clemency.

Mary: I do not deny the greatness of the supreme goodness, but when I consider the magnitude of my offense, I fear that no penitence can suffice to expiate it.

Abraham: I take your iniquity on myself; only return

to the place you have left and resume the life that you abandoned.

Mary: I shall never oppose one of your wishes and I obey your commands with respect.

Abraham: I see now that I have found my daughter again, her to whom I was a father. Now indeed are you dearer to me than aught else.

Mary: I possess some gold and several costly garments. I will dispose of them as your authority dictates.

Abraham: What you have acquired by sin, you must abandon with sin.

Mary: I thought that I would distribute them among the poor or offer them to the altar.

Abraham: The wage of sin is not an agreeable offering to God.

Mary: Then I will trouble myself no more about it.

Abraham: Dawn is whitening the sky; it is growing light. Let us go.

Mary: It is you, beloved father, who should precede, like the good shepherd, the sheep that you have found, and I, following you, will walk in your footsteps.

Abraham: No, not thus. I will go on foot and you shall ride my horse, so that the roughness of the road may not bruise the soles of your tender feet.

Mary: O, how can I praise you worthily? What gratitude can repay so much goodness? Far from forcing me to repent through terror, you gently lead me to penitence by the tenderest exhortations.

Abraham: I ask nothing of you but to remain faithful to the Lord during the rest of your life.

Mary: I will follow God with all my will, with all my strength; and if I lack the strength, at least I shall never lack the desire.

Abraham: You must now serve God with that ardor with which you followed the vanities of the world.

(They complete the journey and reach the hermitage.)

Abraham: With what celerity we have surmounted the difficulties of this hard journey.

Mary: Devotion makes all things easy.

Possibly Hrotsvitha's age has been maligned, but we must remember that no age can smother the voice of eternal love and eternal pity. When the soul touches God even ever so little, it rises above its age and speaks a universal language which all times and all hearts can understand.

MOHAMMED THE MERCIFUL

Extracts from the Sunan, traditional sayings of Mohammed

When God created the creation He wrote a book which is near Him upon the sovran throne and what is written in it is this: "Verily my compassion overcometh my wrath."

Say not, if people do good to us we will do good to them, and if people oppress us we will oppress them; but resolve that if people do good to you, you will do good to them, and if they oppress you, oppress them not again.

There are seven people whom God will draw under His shadow on that day when there will be no other shadow: one a just king; another, who hath employed himself in devotion from his youth; the third, who fixeth his heart on the mosque till he return to it; the fourth, two men whose friendship is to please God, whether together or separate; the fifth, a man who remembereth God when he is alone, and weepeth; the sixth, a man who is tempted by a rich and beautiful woman, and saith, Verily I fear God; the seventh, a man who hath given alms and concealed it, so that his left hand knoweth not what his right hand doeth.

When God created the earth it began to shake and tremble, then God created mountains and put them upon the earth, and the land became firm and fixed; and the Angels were astonished at the hardness of the hills, and said, "O God, is there anything of Thy creation harder than hills?" and God said, "Yes, water is harder than the hills, because it breaketh them." Then the angel said, "O Lord, is there anything of Thy creation harder than water?" He said, "Yes, wind overcometh water: it doth agitate it and put it in motion." They said, "O our Lord! is there anything of Thy creation harder than wind?" He said, "Yes, the children of Adam giving alms: those who give with their right hand and conceal from their left, overcome all."

Think not that any good act is contemptible, though it be but your brother's coming to you with an open countenance and good humour.

There is alms for a man's every joint, every day in which the sun riseth; doing justice between two people is alms; and assisting a man upon his beast and with his baggage, is alms; and pure words, for which are rewards; and answering a questioner with mildness is alms; and every step which is made towards prayer is alms; and removing that which is an inconvenience to man, such as stones and thorns, is alms.

Feed the hungry, visit the sick, and free the captive if he be unjustly bound.

A keeper of fasts who doth not abandon lying and slandering, God careth not about his leaving off eating and drinking.

Fear God in respect of animals: ride them when they are fit to be ridden, and get off when they are tired. A man came before the Prophet with a carpet, and said, "O Prophet! I passed through a wood and heard the voices of

the young of birds; and I took and put them into my carpet; and their mother came fluttering around my head, and I uncovered the young, and the mother fell down upon them, then I wrapped them up in my carpet, and there are the young which I have." Then the Prophet said, "Put them down." And when he did so, their mother joined them: and the Prophet said, "Do you wonder at the affection of the mother toward her young? I swear by Him who hath sent me, verily God is more loving to His servants than the mother to these young birds. Return them to the place from which ye took them, and let their mother be with them."

Verily there are rewards for our doing good to dumb animals, and giving them water to drink. An adulteress was forgiven who passed by a dog at a well; for the dog was holding out his tongue from thirst which was near killing him, and the woman took off her boot and tied it to the end of her garment and drew water for the dog and gave him to drink; and she was forgiven for that act. . . . He who is not loving to God's creatures and to his own children, God will not be loving to him.

It was asked, "O Messenger of God, what relation is most worthy of doing good to?" He said, "Your mother"; this he repeated thrice. . . . Whoso comforteth a woman who has lost her child will be covered with a garment in paradise.

The hearts of men are at the disposal of God like unto one heart, and He turneth them about in any way that He pleaseth. O Director of hearts, turn our hearts to obey Thee.

A man asked the Prophet what was the mark whereby a man might know the reality of his faith. He said, "If thou derive pleasure from the good which thou hast done, and be grieved for the evil which thou hast committed, thou art a true believer."

REPORT

The outstanding event at Ananda-Ashrama during July, August and September was the benefit "Concert of the Nations" given in the patio of Ashrama Cloister the afternoon of August 15th. This concert was arranged by a devoted friend of the work as an expression of gratitude to the Swami for the inspiration and help she had received. Its central idea was to show the drawing together of Eastern and Western music through the adoption by modern composers of the five-tone Oriental scale. This was illustrated on the piano with compositions of Debussy, Royce, Wachtmeister and others, and by the singing of Chinese and Japanese folk songs. There were also folk songs of other nations and recitation with piano accompaniment. The artists, who were all members of the work, were in costume, and as most of them had professional training, the concert seemed in no sense an amateur production. The green grass, the blue sky, the trees, the flowers and the stone-flagged arcades made a charming background for this little pageant of world-wide song. As a culmination one of the members with a clear soprano sang a new poem of Swami Paramananda's, "Bird of Song", arranged to an air of Chaminade's, which matched the words in its ecstatic lilt. The attendance was good and many who could not come bought tickets. The return from the concert was dedicated by the Swami to the erection of a little rest home at the Ashrama for those who come seeking physical as well as spiritual help. This is the first time in the history of the work that a benefit performance has been given. That it should come spontaneously from a grateful heart was one of the loveliest things about it.

During the past summer many good friends have visited the Ashrama from various parts of the country—east, mid-

dle-west and north. Of these, some departed regretfully after a few days or weeks and some are still lingering on. For the benefit of the growing Ashrama community, the Swami has established a Sunday morning Devotional Service at eleven o'clock to which all friends are welcome.

There have been outside activities as well: a series of eleven lectures at the Pasadena Theosophical Forum on Friday evening; a course of lectures which the Swami gave at Santa Monica, and a garden party at a lovely Pasadena home arranged by several devoted members for the purpose of introducing to their friends the Swami's new book of poems, "Rhythm of Life". The Swami read and interpreted the poems himself, after which refreshments were served under a vine-covered pergola.

REVIEWS

A voluminous Life of Sri Ramakrishna is the truly valuable contribution which the Advaita Ashrama at Almora has just made to the world. The publishers have sought to present their facts in a simple, straight-forward manner so that the reader may form from them his own judgment of this marvellous life which, Mahatma Ghandi states in his foreword, "enables us to see God face to face", and convinces us that "God alone is real and all else is an illusion".

* * * *

The Vedanta Society of San Francisco has done well to present to the Western reading public in attractive pamphlet form Swami Vivekananda's lecture on the "Women of India". There is no subject more misunderstood in the Occident than this subject of the Hindu woman, so gracious and beautiful in herself, and so mighty in the worship of motherhood which she has inspired throughout India.

These publications are obtainable at Ananda-Ashrama.

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"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tyndall.

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HEAL THYSELF

By Swami Paramananda



O turn within for help is perhaps the last thing we mortals do when we are in need. As a rule, we seek our remedies outside. In the world of sickness we try to find the remedy for sickness; in the world of trouble we try to find the remedy for trouble, and in our great desire to cure our ills we seem to increase them. Fresh tragedies occur and thwart our purpose. For this reason the wise seek other means than those the world can give. The great Roman philosopher, Epictetus, tells us that, "It is more necessary for the soul to be cured than the body, and it is better to die than to live unworthily."

There is a legend concerning a woman who was very vain, especially of her lovely locks. Through misdeeds she brought upon herself the tragedy of blindness. Her friends urged her to go to a certain shrine noted for its healing and pray that her sight be restored. This she did with great yearning heart and humbleness of spirit. The priest of the church, a saintly man, looked at her and said, "Sister, I see that you have very fair locks; they are to you an element of danger. Cut them off and lay them on the altar." She was so desirous of receiving her healing that she was willing to make any sacrifice. So she cut off her

hair and offered it to the Virgin and immediately her sight returned to her. Her friends gave great thanks, but her heart was very sore, and she cried: "Oh, Mother Mary, at what cost hast Thou bestowed on me Thy Mercy!" No sooner had she thought this than her locks came back to her, and also with them, her blindness. What avails healing if there is blindness in the soul? The outer sight does not suffice.

Every man's soul must be healed. It must be cleansed and bathed, and it is not the earth water that can cleanse it. There is within us a mighty Source, sufficing for every need, physical, mental and spiritual. There is a very great Hand that is ever ready to guide us, but we draw our own hand away and then we cannot help but suffer. Whenever we come in contact with that divine essence, our soul is healed. Instead of going directly to it, however, as a child goes to its mother, we seek guidance from the worldly wise and our minds become confused. It is our own ego and self-interest that distort our vision. Continuous concern for body and bodily health may prove a great drawback, and this body interest may be present even with those who take their stand upon the Spirit. For instance, there are people who assume that body does not exist; body is matter; it is only Spirit that is real. Yet in spite of all their affirmations, in spite of all their themes and theories, we find that they lay their emphasis upon the very thing they claim is non-existent. Of course, this is inconsistent and irrational. There is no doubt that the affirmation of high principles is helpful to the individual, and sometimes it acts as a tonic, but only as we realize the reality of Spirit definitely in our mind, the afflictions of the bodily life are minimized almost to the point of nothingness.

We must not be drastic in our assertions; we should

not make statements which are inconsistent with our life and action. Bodily life exists, and there is no need of denying it. A good and efficient body can be a very eminent help in working out the best principles of living. We should strive to make it a fitting instrument for the highest expression of the soul. Until it is fitting, until it is in harmony with our thought and aspiration, we shall not be able to reach our goal. So long, however, as we are conscious of the body, even of a healthy body, we do not demonstrate the highest type of healthfulness. The very fact that we are not conscious of the body makes it possible for us to think freely and to act freely. The body is no longer a hindrance. The man who is constantly thinking how he may protect his body and maintain his health, he is never going to find the true standard of healthfulness, or reach the highest achievement in human existence. Such people are always afraid, —afraid of free action, and that fear impairs the best element in life. He, however, who through superior intelligence has learned to merge his will with the higher will and give his hand to be led by a wiser hand, an infallible hand, he finds the goal.

Let us sometimes forget this thought of health and bodily welfare. I have known illnesses which physicians pronounced absolutely incurable, to be cured, where people have been able to free themselves from the bondage of bodily consciousness. How to account for it? Disconnection from the source of illness and connection with the Source of life. By laying undue importance on physical health we make ourselves unhealthy; disregarding health also is unhealthy. It is sanity of mind which gives us a balanced state in all our affairs. Moderation in everything is a very good principle for healthfulness. Health is not

an accident. We cannot have a healthy body unless we have a healthy mind, and a healthy mind does not come as a matter of chance. We cannot indulge in hatred, jealousy or anger, without opening ourselves to some violent reaction, first on the emotional plane, and then on the physical. Instead of creating with our mind, we destroy; and we cannot destroy anything without destroying ourselves; that is, breaking our moral fibre. In one sense soul can never be destroyed, but it can be buried under meshes of matter, under doubt, despondency and despair. Doubt of ourselves, doubt of God, doubt of humanity, these are the most diseased conditions that can exist. The greatest death-blow to the ills of life is to walk in the light. Some day or other we come to this recognition and that is the end of our trouble.

When we give up scheming and planning by artificial means for our happiness and our restoration; when we learn to go directly to God, to that spiritual essence, then we find the real cure for our ills. We cannot preach God unless we have God-abiding consciousness; we cannot preach health unless we are ourselves healthy. By that I do not mean merely a healthy physical body, but a soul that shines from within with the glow of love, consecration, purity and nobility. When we have this we constantly benefit the world. We radiate the spirit of Truth.

In the metaphysical life to-day, healing has become very much like the sale of patent medicine. Practically every one has something to say on the subject. From this we must recognize its eminent need. People are running after health, so that whenever any one comes with a new method, we find masses gathering there. Perhaps he has something to give. It may be borrowed knowledge, or he may have worked it out himself; but this is certain: the individual

life has absolutely everything to do with healing. A doctor may give medicine and rescue you from some illness; a healer may put you on your feet; but you can again be laid up, if you do not know how to benefit by what you have received and conduct your life through such channels that your health will be safe-guarded. This implies right living. There is no way of evading it. You may say: "I exposed myself, therefore I am ill. I ate too much, or ate something imprudently." These things do not happen through chance. If there is an element of greed in a man, he will not be able to control his appetite. This will invariably lead him to some breakdown. It may not happen to-day, but it will come.

Until we have opened the channels of healthfulness within us, no one can really help us. We may be given a set of rules for noble living, but unless we apply them they will avail us nothing. That is the tragedy of modern life. To-day we have books, we have theories—hundreds of them, thousands of them. We study them intellectually, but when it comes to their practical application, we fall short. You may deny this; you may point to the wonderful equipment for the care of the sick, to the sanitariums and hospitals. It is very wonderful, the efficient care that is given; but would it not be better if there were less sickness, so that so much equipment would not be required? Would it not be a happier existence? This is where we have a distorted notion of life. We think that to be civilized we must have all that stands for outer glamour, even to the military power with its poison gas and ingenious inventions. This opens another avenue: that we have to be controlled by such drastic measures, that we have lost our self-control and sense of proportion, our sense of right and of spiritual values to such an extent that these things are necessary. Same

principle is involved in the measures that are being taken to bring relief and comfort to people. It is a very fleeting comfort. Would it not be much better if we could find means by which they could be taught to live in the right way? Living in the right way implies less sickness, less unwholesomeness, less disorder in life. It is not what we do, but how we do it. Unless we have spiritual principles to sustain us, life will break us whether we sit idle at home or work at the office.

We cannot have a secured form of health until we have cleansed our house. That means remodeling our life, and our habits; re-organizing our entire daily routine, and primarily our thoughts. A person can make himself sick just through his attitude of mind. For instance, in the morning you feel something in you a little out of tune, and unless you know how to re-establish your lost equilibrium it will express itself through a word of impatience or angry act. As you dwell on it, the whole horizon of your mind grows clouded, your functioning becomes disordered, and before you know it you are ill. These are not merely theories. Even scientists recognize these facts. Any physician will tell you that so long as a patient dwells on his condition no amount of medicine will save him, because his whole consciousness has become saturated with sickness. His mind must transcend the condition. But mind needs some ideal by means of which it can transcend. Man must have an ideal. Otherwise life becomes a danger.

We can never do anything contrary to our faith. If we believe altogether in the flesh we shall follow the way of the flesh no matter how much Bibles and religions may cry out against it. Sometimes we have to be taught through utmost tragedy. We have almost to be broken so that we can be mended; and we are mended, we are restored and

redeemed when our spirit blends with its Source. It is a very wonderful, very fortunate moment for us when we come, even through tragic experience, to the foot of the altar, when we really learn to lay ourselves there and say: Now I come to Thee bare, without any will of my own; self-will has brought me only disaster.

Let us make that which is first, our first consideration. If a man is well established in his spiritual life, if he feels that surging power of life itself flowing through him, through his body, his mind, his heart, through all his actions, he is not going to be ill. It is not a question of imagination. If we cut off the root of the tree, how long will the tree flourish? We may be able to keep it for a while, but it will surely die. Same way it is with our life. We cannot find life's fulfillment until we get to the very root of our being and learn to nurture it with noble thoughts and habits of living. This is not only the wisdom of ancient times; it is the eternal wisdom: "First seek ye the Kingdom of God" is given as the very first principle. All other things whatsoever we have need of, will be added.

You may say that this is nothing new. It is not, but its application will bring new results in our life. Are we paying any heed to this principle? On the contrary, we are trying to reverse it as much as possible. We come seeking this and we come seeking that. We want to find something that will give us health so that we may never be ill; we want to be taught how to retain our youthfulness so that we may always be young. These special whims and desires we have, but the only way we can fulfill them is by following certain principles. Then all these things come to us as the fruition of life. Often people ask: What is the secret of youth? It is an open secret, though few take it and benefit by it. Cease to think of yourself. That is the

secret. It is by thinking of ourselves that we break ourselves down. Every one wants beauty, but in order to have beauty we must first connect ourselves with the source of beauty. Every one wants happiness and health, but to possess these we must acquire inner wholeness and peace. It is very simple and only when our minds are twisted and distorted do we find it difficult to accomplish. If we go simply, directly towards it, we can accomplish it. When we forget ourselves altogether in that great Immensity, wonderful power flows through us, and it is this which enables us to do our work.

When our mind is focussed on something bigger, better and more wholesome than our physical self, necessarily we receive sustenance. Intellectually we perceive this, but the body asserts its hold upon us. It takes us unaware. Instead of thinking upon God or holy things, we find we are concentrating upon our little aches and pains, or perhaps on a grudge we bear against some one. Whatever we think about, we absorb constantly. If we think we are going to die, we may almost come to the door of death through our fear. Again when we lift our mind to that aspect of life which is undying, we become imbued with the deathless Spirit. It is there for us all,—that Spirit. Christ and the saints have no monopoly over it. In fact they do not want a monopoly. To say that we have no access to it, that we are sinners born in an imperfect condition, is a very detrimental thing; it is a diseased condition of mind.

One who has formed the habit of living in an unwholesome way can also form the habit of living in wholesome way. The body will respond. Even a dead body, a body which is dense and deformed, will respond to the call of the Spirit. That is what we see as miracle. Where there is a living point of contact, at once there is response, and the

only point of contact that is living, that will redeem the ills of the world, is the contact of love. If we begin to analyze fundamental principles, we shall find that all miracles are the response of life. Where there is no light, no one can give light. Light cannot come out of non-light. But what avails, if we understand these things only intellectually? We must try to live by them, abide by them, saturate our whole being with them. The things that we desire,—happiness, beauty and eternal life,—all will come of their own accord when we have given our soul a chance for ripening. We shall never gain them through anxiety, ambition, or by cheating another. If we, however, patiently, watchfully, fervently work for this inner ripening, it will come in due season and then we shall have fulfillment. If in spite of all our watching and care we stumble, we must not let that discourage us. We must keep on, keep on, keep on and each time we shall draw a little nearer to the goal. Our whole life will become in tune, and we shall say the right thing, do the right thing and think the right thing without any calculation. That is my greatest plea to humanity: rhythmic life, a life that strikes no discordant note. If we are not discordant within ourselves, we shall never strike a discordant note in others. Wherever there is light, there is no darkness. Wherever there is glow of Spirit, there is no illness.

Heal your soul. You cannot do it yourself, but One from whom we have descended, that One can always redeem us. Guard your mind; guard your thought. It is the great lesson we must learn. Strive to express life in its fundamental beauty. It is the truest form of self-expression. It is the keynote to all spiritual philosophy. Open the doors, the windows, every avenue of your soul to the beneficent Sun, that it may keep you sanctified and clean. When every-

thing is cleansed and purified, there will be no ills. If a man has not cleansed his inner life his prayers will never ascend. Do you suppose he can lift his prayer to God and have it granted, if his heart is filled with selfishness, egotism and harshness? Every prayer is fulfilled when it comes with childlike simplicity. Our helplessness is our greatest safeguard.

Find your healing in the arms of God. When once we have found it there, our tendency will be to reach others with the same love, to give out of our bounty. That is what I call divine love. When once our life is touched by that, we no longer fear, we no longer are anxious for ourselves or for anyone else. No matter what our religion, our faith is never well tested until we can face every condition of life and keep our gaze fixed on that One; until we can place ourselves wholly in His hands, can give ourselves over to Him altogether and say: Not my will but Thine, at all hours, be done. That is the fulfillment, the highest goal of life.

GREAT COMFORTER

From the "Gospel of the White Lotus"

(A Japanese Buddhist Scripture)

The Gate of Infinite Law explains all things, opens the way to the immortal, delivers from the bondage of custom, removes the worries of existence, and gives great rest to the soul. It is a doctrine true and good, a great realm of bliss, from an unsought Teacher. It gives a place of calm joy, of salvation, protection, and is a great defence. It has a great and faithful Leader who is eyes for the blind multitude: a pilot,—a great Pilot; a chief physician,—the great chief Physician; a comforter,—the great Comforter. Great is this awakening Light!

The great and holy Lord, by the incense of His virtue, makes all things fragrant. . . . The principles of all goodness come from Him. Because of this light pride and insolence disappear; one becomes a new being. For this new life one renounces every hindrance ungrudgingly: in word or thought ready to give head and brains for others' weal. Fearing not sword nor spear, nor wounds of curse, nor insult, one enjoys a royal calm. Following it one can surmount all difficulties. After receiving this new life, one can persuade others to forsake their doubts.

There is a way which enables its followers to attain the highest wisdom. This way is called "Eternal Righteousness". From eternity until now its nature is calm. The Scripture called "Eternal Righteousness" is true and upright, honors the highest. All the Illumined, past, present and to come, proclaim it. It uproots the sorrows of all beings. . . . After untold *kalpas* (ages) men fail to reach the highest wisdom because they do not know how straight the right way is; therefore, they take the wrong and fall into many snares. This wisdom makes those who once were without aim in life desire to save their fellowmen. There opens up before them a boundless vista of righteousness, reaching beyond this mortal life. Quite fearlessly, like their Guide, they pass from death to life: like Him they pass from death to life. If one receives the Doctrine of this Scripture and reverently believes it, as though seeing God, then he becomes like God! The weak in faith is transformed into the strong because of this august Scripture's power. It is as though this body were endowed with the endurance of the immortal and had arrived in Port. Whoever calls upon the Name of God, God's Way has found already. Of these who hearken and obey, there is not one who shall not thus become immortal!

IMPLICIT PERFECTION*By Friederich Froebel*

(A German Educational Reformer of the 18th Century)

All that does not grow out of one's inner being, all that is not one's own original feeling and thought, or that at least does not awake that, oppresses and defaces the individuality of man instead of calling it forth, and nature becomes thereby a caricature. Shall we never cease to stamp human nature, even in childhood, like coins? to overlay it with foreign images and foreign superscriptions, instead of letting it develop itself and grow into form according to the law of life planted in it by God the Father, so that it may be able to bear the stamp of the Divine, and become an image of God?

The theory of love is to serve as the highest goal and polestar of human education, and must be attended to in the germ of humanity, the child, and truly in his very first impulses. The conquest of self-seeking egoism is the most important task of education; for selfishness isolates the individual from all communion, and kills the life-giving principle of love. Therefore the first object of education is to teach to love, to break up the egoism of the individual, and to lead him from the first stage of communion in the family through all the following stages of social life to the love of humanity, or to the highest self-conquest by which man rises to Divine unity.

What shall we learn from our yearning look into the heart of the flower and the eye of the child? This truth: Whatever develops, be it into flower or tree or man, is from the beginning implicitly that which it has the power to become. The possibility of perfect manhood is what you read in your child's eye, just as the perfect flower is prophesied in the bud, or the giant oak in the tiny acorn. Strive

to define to your self what is that generic ideal which is wrapped up in your child. Surely, as your child—or in other words, as child of man—he is destined to live in the past and future as well as in the present. His earthly being implies a past heaven; his birth makes a present heaven; in his soul he holds a future heaven. This threefold heaven, which you also bear within you, shines out on you through your child's eyes.

The beast lives only in the present. Of past and future he knows naught. But to man belong not only the present, but also the future and the past. His thought pierces the heaven of the future, and hope is born. He learns that all human life is one life; that all human joys and sorrows are his joys and sorrows, and through participation enters the present heaven—the heaven of love. He turns his mind towards the past, and out of retrospection wrests a vigorous faith. These celestial virtues will link his life with the Divine life through which all life is one—with the God who is the supernal fountain of life, light, and love.

PRAHLADA'S HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

Yoga-Vasishtha Maharamayana

I thank Thee, O Lord and great Spirit, that are beyond all things; yet art found in myself by my good fortune.

O my Lord, save Thee, that dost vouchsafe to embrace and look upon me when I pray unto Thee, I have no other friend in the three worlds.

It is Thou that preservest and destroyest all and givest all things to everybody; and it is Thou that makest us to move and work and praise Thy Holy Name. Now art Thou found and seen by me and now Thou goest away from me.

I hail Thee, Thou felicitous One, that art my Maker and Preserver also! I thank Thee that art the stalk of this

fruit of the world, and that art the eternal and pure soul of all.

I thank Thee that art the creator and beholder of all and the manifester of innumerable forms. I thank Thee that art Thyself the whole of nature.

There is nothing here that is permanent, O God, beside Thyself. Thou being obtained, there is nothing else to desire.

I thank Thee, Lord, that art obtained, seen and known by me this day, and that shalt be so preserved by me as never to be obliterated from my mind.

As the feeling of heat and cold is perceived by touch, and as the fragrance of the flower is felt in the oil with which it is mixed, so I feel Thy Presence by Thy coming in contact with my heart.

As the sound of music enters into the heart through the ears and makes the heart strings to thrill and the hairs of the body to stand on end, so is Thy presence perceived in our hearts also.

As the objects of taste are felt by the tip of the tongue which conveys their relish to the mind, so is Thy presence felt in my heart, when Thou touchest it with Thy love.

Thou dwellest, O Lord, in my formless, tranquil, transparent and conscious soul, as Thou residest in Thy own Spirit, which is unbounded by the limitations of time and space.

The succession of pain and pleasure ceases to be felt by one who feels Thee within himself, just as the shades of darkness, the twinkling of stars and the coldness of frost cease to exist in the bright sunlight.

The temporary feelings of pleasure and pain can find no room in the fulness of heavenly felicity, just as a minute fraction of time is of no account in the abyss of eternity.

All joy to Thee that art both born and unborn with the body, and decaying, art undecaying in Thy nature, that art the unsubstantial substance of all qualities and art known and unknown to every one.

When Thou art situated in me, my soul is freed from all troubles and desires and passions and is placed in perfect rest. There is no more any fear of danger or difficulty or of life and death, nor any craving for prosperity when I am absorbed in everlasting bliss with Thee.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

This attention to health is a hindrance to learning of any kind, to invention, and to diligent study, as we are always feeling suspicious shootings and swimmings of the head, and blaming our learned studies as the cause; so that it is a great stumbling-block when virtuous objects are aimed at and pursued, for it makes us always think ourselves ill, and never to cease feeling pain in our body.—*Plato*.

The body has in itself a certain power of curing itself and many things can rouse this curative power into action, such as mental conditions or medicine, or exercise. As long as we are disturbed by physical conditions, so long we need the help of physical agencies. Not until we have got rid of bondage to the nerves can we disregard them.

—*Swami Vivekananda*.

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity.—*Shelley*.

There are also three in every ten whose aim is to live, but whose movements tend to the land or place of death. And for what reason? Because of their excessive endeavors to perpetuate life.—*Tao-Teh King*.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(Owing to lack of space several chapters have been omitted here. They will appear in the book)

CHAP. XIV

WORK AND TRAVELS IN EUROPE

The Swami's first real contact with Europe was during his journey to India in 1911. A lecture at Stratford-on-Avon and an informal meeting at Dusseldorf were the only public activities attempted by him at that time. Both of these however called forth urgent requests to return. An invitation from Italy bent his thoughts still more strongly towards Europe. A final determining factor in the summer's plan was a letter from a Swiss lady and gentleman, asking how they could reach the Swami and obtain from him permission to translate his "Path of Devotion" into French; adding that they hoped the Swami would pay them a long visit, should he come abroad. With openings in Switzerland, Italy, Germany and England, the Swami felt fully justified in sailing for Europe the first week of June, 1912. On the tenth he wrote from the steamer: "Much has happened. I have met a number who are interested in the teaching and yesterday at their request I gave a talk about eleven o'clock. . . . Everything comes through Mother's will. I know the Divine Mother always protects us."

His letters from this time give a succinct and vivid account of his teaching and his travels. From Paris he wrote on the thirteenth: "We arrived here safely Tuesday at six a. m. after spending the night in the train from Cherbourg. We have taken several drives and seen many, many interesting things. I have enjoyed it very much. I think the park system of Paris is the most beautiful I have ever seen in any city. . . . I received a letter from Mr. S. yesterday saying that he had arranged everything in Ger-

many. This evening I received a wire asking me to come at once. He does not want me to go to Florence first."

And on August sixteenth: "There is no doubt that the French people are artistic by nature. You will probably smile at me if I express even a very small part of the enthusiasm I feel about Paris this time. Yesterday we went to Versailles; we enjoyed it immensely. It was a beautiful day for the trip. We started at ten and got back in the evening. There were so many things to see of such absorbing interest that I was really thrilled by it. . . . This morning we visited the Museum and Park of the Luxembourg. While walking in the Museum I forgot that I was in Paris. This taught me a great secret. When we reach the heart of a nation, we find something which is neither individual nor national, but universal. It is the same heart, but it beats differently in different nations."

"To-morrow morning I leave by the seven-fifty train for Hagen and am due there at five-forty. Mr. S. sent me another wire to come and not hearing from me, he telephoned from Hagen to Paris to come at once. His devotion is really touching. . . . I have heard from L. She saw Mrs. D. and they want me to come to Florence after the first of July. I also have received a very nice letter from Switzerland. They are ready to welcome me at any time and they want me to stay long. T. says that they want me at Stratford in August. Of course I shall probably go to Florence first, then Switzerland and then we shall see about the rest."

How the days passed at Hagen is shown by this entry in the Swami's diary: "Read the life of Lord Gouranga in the afternoon. Miss M. and Miss P. and some others came and we had a nice meeting. We saw the big airship and after supper we took a long walk in the woods." The work

done during this visit was of an intimate nature. No public lectures were delivered and no publicity was attempted; but a zealous faithful group climbed the steep slopes beyond the city once or twice daily to listen to the Swami and some of them still remain his ardent students. Out of this group has grown an organized society for Oriental study to which many professors and learned scholars belong. Every summer with unflinching regularity they send the Swami an insistent request to deliver a course of lectures in Germany. One of the number has also translated several of the Swami's works which have been published by the Society.

From Germany the Swami went to Italy. "I arrived here on July third after spending the previous night at Milan", his first letter from Florence reads. "L. and her mother met me at the station. . . . Now about the work here. I have met some very charming people. They are most anxious to start a branch Centre. To-morrow afternoon I am going to speak at their villa. I have been to dine with them and they have been here twice. They do not seem to be able to express their joy and gratitude and declare they cannot say enough and are full of devotion. They are trying to organize a Centre, although most people are away. I shall go to visit them by the first of next week and will probably stay until the end of the month. It seems that the Lord has already made some plan for work here. I shall also write to Marquesa T. I shall visit her by the first of next month. This villa where I am stopping is a wonderful place, very large. Mrs. D. offered me the use of it for the work. I think the villa B. would be better. I shall not go to England this year as I shall have enough to do here and in Switzerland."

Again on July twentieth: "Our meeting here last Saturday went off nicely. There were a number of people and

most of them seemed deeply impressed. I came to visit Mr. and Mrs. B. and I cannot tell you in words what a hearty welcome I received. It is a most wonderful household. Even the smallest children seem to feel keenly about my coming here. They all went in town to buy me some presents. Madame B. is a wonderful soul. She is the mother of seven children. She is very spiritual, pure and strong-minded. She brings up her children on a vegetarian diet and they are all healthy and strong. Her feeling for the work and teaching is very beautiful. The little children come to me constantly and when they come to say good-night it is too cunning for words. I am really overwhelmed by their devotion. It looks as though we were going to have a Centre here."

A little later he wrote: "I shall leave here for Bellaggio by the end of this month and from there to Gryon. May the Lord bless us more and more every day with all spiritual strength that we may bring blessing to many others." And on the nineteenth of July: "The time has passed very rapidly here. There is so much genuine interest. I talk by the hour and some of it is falling in good soil. Every one is so kind to me here. I went to dine at the Villa Gamberaia with some new friends. I found the Princess G. and Miss B. deeply interested. They want me to visit them when I get back in the autumn. Also they say that their motor is at my service at any time. Miss B. said that she had already ordered a number of books."

With the close of July the Swami's field of activity shifted to Switzerland, for he had promised to spend the month of August with his unknown Swiss friends at their home in Gryon-sur-Bex. A letter of August fifth from there tells of his journey and arrival. "I arrived here yesterday evening after a long journey through the Italian lakes. I left

Florence at midnight of the first. Mr. and Mrs. B. both came to the station to see me off. Their devotion is tireless. It was very difficult to get away from them at all. Now they are expecting me to come to Viareggio, a seashore place, for the last few days of August. I can only say that all this is the work of God. He has awakened a tremendous feeling of devotion in these hearts and He is leading them on."

"I arrived at Bellaggio at eleven o'clock in the morning after nearly two hours' trip on Lake Como. Marquesa T. met me with her motor at the station and drove me to her mountain home. I did not stay with her for many days but left for Gryon. She is an elderly person and very appreciative. From Bellaggio I went to Minaggio, then through Lake of Lugano, through Luino and Lake Maggiore. I spent the night on Lake Maggiore. The trips on the lakes were beautiful."

"Next morning I took the train for St. Maurice and after two hours' wait at Bex arrived in Gryon at about six in the evening. Mr. and Mrs. P. appreciated very much my coming. They are doing everything to make me comfortable. They are going to have a meeting this afternoon. People will come from the village and probably we shall have meetings every day." And a few days later: "Yesterday was a very busy day for me. Some gentlemen came from Lausanne to see me. One of them is the editor of a state paper. I don't know exactly what that means, but he is a scholarly man. He speaks several languages. He knows Japanese and also a little of Sanskrit. He seemed very happy to meet me and said, 'If I were free I would follow you everywhere,' etc. He and others are thinking quite seriously of the translation of the 'Path of Devotion' and also of bringing out a French edition of the 'Message.' All things are possible for Him."

“My time is quite full. In the morning there comes a group at ten and again in the afternoon at two or so. Then there is the regular class meeting at four-thirty and again in the evening a meditation class. There are some who come just to receive the blessing, although they do not understand English. This attitude is the same as that of India. Things are gradually taking shape. Mr. and Mrs. P. (his host and hostess) are getting more and more deeply interested. They are very attentive to my comfort. I have all my meals in my room separately. This constant giving out drains the physical vitality. The other day as I was talking to people, a thought came to me that a fountain was going on and people coming with little tumblers, pitchers and buckets, but they could not exhaust the fountain. It seems exactly like that; God’s power is inexhaustible.”

And again: “I always feel sure that Divine Mother has some plan for her work. God’s power no mortal can resist. That is what I am conscious of all the time. The task may seem like cutting a road through solid rock, but everything is possible through His will and grace. Power of devotion is wonderful; it opens all possibilities of our knowledge. It is the only way to attain true union. True devotion makes our life richer and more blissful every day. Before long the ‘Path of Devotion’ will probably be translated into Italian and German. Some one here wants to translate it into Dutch, but he is not the person to do it.”

We get a picture from a different angle through letters of the lady and gentleman whose guest the Swami was. These are passages from them: “The Swami gives us a lecture every day and we could listen for hours. He reads the Gita in Sanskrit and explains it. May he stay with us for a long time! We also have an hour for silence—and the joy of it! What holiness radiates from him. We love

him more and more every day. It is wonderful to have him with us and to be able to serve him. The days pass all too quickly. Twice a day, morning and evening, friends come for the hour of silence and receive the blessing of the Swami's presence. The Swami gives himself no rest. People have come all the way from Lausanne to hear him. Others, staying in Gryon for the summer, come daily."

"Our beloved Swami left us on Saturday. My husband and two devoted friends wished to accompany him as far as St. Maurice. They looked after him lovingly and came back the next morning. He took a night train for Italy. All were so sorry that he was leaving. One little girl burst out sobbing. The last day he was incessant in his loving ministrations. Every one wanted a private talk with him and he lectured at the usual hour as well. His purity, his holiness and his utter unselfishness endeared him to everyone."

The seven weeks in Florence which followed the month in Switzerland were unusually productive ones. A course of seven public lectures was given at the Villa B. in the Via Santa Marta, which wound its way up one of the picturesque hillsides of suburban Florence. A large and very lovely music room provided an ample and appropriate setting for the lectures, and the host and hostess, untiring in their zeal and devotion, had a descriptive circular printed and widely circulated. After the first lecture the following notice appeared in the Paris Herald, telegraphed from Florence: "There was a large attendance at the Villa B. yesterday for the first of a series of lectures to be given during September and October by the Swami Paramananda. The subject yesterday afternoon was 'India and Her Contribution to the Thought World.' The Swami comes to Florence from America, where he has founded a Vedanta Centre in

Boston. His object is to form such a Centre in Florence."

Besides these public lectures there were classes and many informal gatherings; for the Swami was surrounded by those who were ardently eager for the teaching and their ardor filled him with ever fresh vigor and enthusiasm. This passage from a letter of September ninth gives us a glimpse into his daily routine: "Perhaps you would like to know the routine of the day here. I always get up early and finish my meditation and reading of the Scriptures before Monsieur and Madame B. come up with my breakfast. They always start the day that way. After breakfast I go out into the garden for a walk and then I do some work. We have our dinner at one o'clock, all of us, including four of the oldest children. Then in the afternoon we have a long walk and after supper we either talk or do some work. Last night we worked on the chapter on 'Purity' from the 'Path of Devotion'—I mean the French translation of it. Then again M. and Mme. B. come up to my room with me to bid me goodnight."

And in another letter: "You will be happy to know that the work here is starting nicely through His will. There was a large gathering here last Saturday at the class and every one showed great appreciation. Last Thursday we also had a large number. People are just beginning to get back from their summer vacation so we shall have more and more people. I have an invitation to go to Paris. There was a French lady who visited the Chalet at Gryon while I was there. I shall probably go there in November after spending a few days at Gryon and Geneva. The work seems to be spreading. Everything is through His will."

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord, our God.—*Psalms*.

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

Ever since its foundation, Ananda-Ashrama has had great need of a Guest-house. It was inevitable that the peace, the beauty, the spiritual atmosphere of the place should draw an ever-increasing number of those who seek to spend a few days, weeks or months under its benign influence. Up to this time, however, there has been barely accommodation for the consecrated workers, so that all requests for temporary residence met with the answer: "Soon we hope to have a Guest-house."

Through his vision and faith, Swami Paramananda is bringing this hope to fulfillment. Through his vision, because he has seen the instant need of it and the part that it will play in the future of the work; through his faith, because without unshakable faith he could not have undertaken such a heavy responsibility at this time. The building was started in September and already the Swami's faith is being justified. Eager hands and hearts have been offered for his service. One member has spent days in an effort to secure materials at wholesale figures and his enthusiasm has borne fruit. Two other members have left their places of employment to aid in the building and have put into the construction a true spirit of consecration. One gentleman made a donation sufficient to pay the wages of a carpenter for a short time. "I cannot come and work myself", he said, "but I can help some one else to work." And so the walls are being raised in love and every day as the building grows those who watch it are struck by the simple beauty of its lines, which seem to reflect the spirit of its designer,—the Swami himself. It stands below the Cloister on a slight eminence which commands marvelous views, and has about it a feeling of friendliness and cheer. It is hoped that it will be ready for guests before the New Year.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



DECEMBER, 1925

CHRIST WITHIN

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Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tyndall.

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CHRIST WITHIN

By Swami Paramananda



THE whole secret of life and its sustaining power lies in whether or not we have found our real centre of being. "In each human spirit is a Christ concealed, To be helped or hindered, To be hurt or healed. If from any human soul you lift the veil, you will find a Christ there hidden without fail." The truth is given here simply and directly; it is we who hide our spiritual heritage and again we have the power to reveal it. Intellectually we may grasp the value of seeing God, of finding Christ within,—that beautiful spiritual significance symbolized in Christ. We can even talk about it. It is very easy to pick up a sentence or two, or to quote texts from one Bible or another. They are noble, they are exalting, they are true. But are we able to give them expression in our life? That is the point. If we are not, then our words will be empty, especially for us, although some one else who has the quickening within his soul may benefit by them.

Our faith must be living and definite. We must prove it. How may we prove it? It is not proved by our word of mouth. One who has true worth within himself does not go out with aggressive spirit to voice his wisdom. Chal-

lenging some one, fighting, quarrelling, disputing,—that is not the way to prove anything. How do we prove when we have real humility? By our very existence—the word we utter, the attitude we take; in our walking, even in our speaking, we exhibit it unconsciously, because it is a perpetual experience in our soul. You say you have love in your heart. How do you prove it? Not in words. It finds its expression through your action. Therefore, if we have Christ within, we must prove it by our conduct, that we may resemble Christ, or our conception of Christ, in love, in understanding, in humility, in wisdom, in service. These are the qualities which make our life worth while. In order to find its greatest fulfillment this human life of ours requires something other than just the care of the body. There is no man who can be truly satisfied by the external. We cannot merely feed the body and be sustained; we cannot nurture our physical existence properly if in any manner we neglect our spiritual existence. That is why it is not enough for us to say vaguely, Christ is within. We should venture to prove it, not in order to make a demonstration before others, but because it is our need. We need this realization just as we need food and shelter, clothes and their warmth. When these outer needs come to us, we feel them very definitely and we exert ourselves to supply them. In same way, this great spiritual need is present in every soul and until it can be satisfied there will be a tremendous vacancy within.

It is not possible for a soul to find happiness, peace or anything that is abiding, so long as there is this inner vacancy. It must be filled. To this end there is the world of religion. Yet in spite of all the churches, that vacancy in the soul remains. Most men think their duty to religion is performed if they go to church once a week. This

may be an inspiration to them, a stimulus to remind them of their divine origin; but it is a negative form of religion. No tree can live when it is severed from its root. Nothing can live that is separated from its source. Keeping ourselves connected with the Source of our life through our thought, through our actions, through our aspirations, through our whole routine of living, is to my mind the practical expression of religion and spirituality. We must prove our religion by our life, by our conduct, and this we cannot do accidentally. It requires devotion. A man who carries thoughts of business and worries in his mind continuously, sometimes will speak them out even in his dream. Same way it is when we have delicate thoughts and feelings, we convey them unconsciously, they permeate our life; and if they are spiritual, they will conquer all our ills.

We wonder why our life is so empty, why we are so unhappy. The key is in our own hand. That little poem of Jalalud-Din-Rumi is significant, very, very true. "In each human spirit is a Christ concealed". Christ is concealed in each human spirit, in the universal sense. Knowledge of this fact can be a most tremendous help to a man. It can become his constant guide, like a lamp that he carries during the dark hours. In the moment of struggle he finds that this light reveals his path, shows him the road. When he neglects it, does not consult it, or goes against it, he suffers. "If from any human soul you lift the veil": this veil comes in the form of doubt, in the form of despondency, in the form of malice, envy or jealousy, and it is we who create it. We may pretend to be very pious, we may go and kneel before the altar and make a show of devotion, but unless there is genuine feeling within, we derive nothing. Spirituality is not pomp or ostentation, but that which is directly manifested in our soul. When this consciousness

is established within us, not as a vague or visionary idea of religion or God, but as a very definite factor in our life, it becomes a real, a constant friend. If we have a very wise friend our first thought in elation or perplexity is to share it with that friend. Same way it should be in our relation with God. It is not only in the hour of distress that we should pray to God to be delivered from our trouble. That is a very poor way of religion. It brings the spirit of bartering and bargaining. True religion comes when the heart, through sense of love, through sense of justice, through sense of longing, reaches out so perpetually, so continuously towards the eternal Source that no vacancy is left. If there is no vacancy in the soul, there will be no room for any evil to enter.

Sometimes one who has been church-going and very pious, succumbs to the calamity of great evil. Do not suppose that we become angry or hateful, or do something that is ignoble suddenly. We prepare ourselves for such things and no amount of church, creed or dogma can prevent our falling under their sway. God is not the respecter of creed or dogma; He sees our souls as they are. We are related to Him as souls and as souls we go to Him, cleansed and purified. We need no other recognition. There is no one so full of fear, or so degraded that he cannot lift his head and heart and go to that all-merciful, tender, divine Parent. If we have any misgivings, if we have any fear that we have done too many wrong things, that we have lost our opportunities and cannot go there, we should free our mind from such anxieties. Have you ever known a true mother who would turn her back on a child because of his misdeeds or the blunders he has committed? On the contrary, a mother may wait a long time, for she knows it is no use trying to persuade that child until he comes to her of his

own will, and it is in this way we are ever protected and sustained by the Divine Mother.

That which is within we must reach from within. Not with the power of wealth can we buy for the soul its birthright. It is not the man of wealth who finds inner happiness and peace. To find that inner peace and abiding happiness, we must create certain qualities within ourselves,—qualities of the soul. There are some souls whom we cannot disturb in any circumstance because they have found that lasting, abiding shelter. We may try to hurt them; we may say unkind, even blasphemous things against them, but they turn altogether a deaf ear. The usual response of the world to such things is anger, hatred or revenge; but these souls, we find, are above that. We do not reach this point by taking a negative attitude; rather is it through a very strong spiritual conviction. When we realize our divine birthright, when we feel within our soul that great Presence, when we know that we are sustained by That, can never be severed from That, what a tremendous sense of security comes upon us! It is only as we lack this vision, or have not this definite connection, that we are fretful, anxious, jealous, hateful, that we take to mean methods of scheming and petty devices to gain our ends. As soon as that other vista opens before us, however, it brings wonderful healing to the soul.

This divine Presence, this Christ-spirit we all possess. You may say: "If we all have it, there is no need for any exertion." We all have it, but for the majority it is only a theory, an abstract, indefinite idea. We must draw our hearts close to it; and to this end we must take time, just as we take time for our physical needs. How refreshing it is in the morning to have a bath. It revives us. Even a sick person feels new life from it. Same way when we make

our inner contact, we feel perpetually a new impetus, a new desire for a better life, a new up-holding by a mighty Hand. We make this contact through prayer, through devotion, through study, or through a spirit of consecration. ' It makes no difference how we reach it, but there must be a very definite contact in our soul. There is no man strong enough to walk alone. Souls intoxicated by wealth, ambition, materialism, often think that they are self-sufficing. Some of the great monarchs, men mighty in the sense of world values, what is their destiny? They crumble or their ambition crumbles to nothingness. They bring only destruction. Do not let us be intoxicated by materialism. Rather let us cure this intoxication by spiritual values. There is not a man who does not possess this inner sense of value in his soul.

Recently as I was musing within myself, thinking and pondering, I tried to find a clear definition of Christ's command: "Resist not evil." It is not enough for us to understand it and abide by it to a certain extent; we must find its definite relationship with life in a world of action. It is not a negative teaching, although the majority of people have taken it as negative, because they have never found its vital contact with life, nor the meaning that Christ gave to it. Evil is a definite experience in man's life. Whenever there is any apparent evil he feels that he must fight it, must try to conquer it by force. This fighting of evil has been the usual habit of man. Now what is the practical value of non-resistance? "Resist not evil" means just what is stated; but we should add to that Christ's further injunction, as interpreted by St. Paul: "Overcome evil with good". When these two rules are put together we find the complete expression. Thus non-resistance does not mean merely a negative, passive attitude; it means a positive overcoming of evil by good.

It is the sign of wisdom not to touch anything that might contaminate us, and we cannot fight evil without partaking of it. Therefore the wise man never resists it. When we take that attitude nothing can touch us, nothing can hurt us. But we shall not be able to maintain such a position unless we have some deepening of spiritual understanding. The man who lives in a world of passion and emotion, excitement and anger, jealousy and hatred, it is impossible for him even to venture it. Let him, however, change his mental outlook, then it will not seem such an impossible task; on the contrary, it will become a very dynamic safeguard for him. Unconsciously he will be following a path which will lead him to higher illumination.

To some people this world of ours appears to be full of evil, while others say it is full of good. All is not good in this relative world, and also all is not evil. There is a mixture of good and evil; but in the midst of these dual conditions there is one unchanging Reality. When man finds his relationship with That, then he can go through life with balance, with poise. Call that Reality Christ if that gives you a sense of definite relationship with It; call it Divinity, —Truth—or whatever may be your conception of It; but know that until you find It, it will be very difficult to walk the path of life without failing and faltering. It is only when we establish ourselves on a rock of Truth that we have an unshakable foundation for our life. Then all our actions,—whatsoever we perform with our hands, with our mind,—and all things that are related to us, will have some value. Until we find this basis, however, we are easily shaken; many, many times are we overthrown.

This shows the need of spiritual life and the active man of the world needs it in one form or another even more than does the person who has retired from worldly life.

He needs something other than his little planning and scheming; something that will give him intuition, power, wisdom for right action and the effective carrying out of his plans. There is not a soul who does not at some time or other feel a great yearning, an instinctive reaching out for something other than just this little life and consciousness. Children feel it; grown-up people feel it; and sometimes when we are pressed by circumstances and depressed by the miserable conditions of life, we turn to that great Source and instantly we find a response. Let us turn to it more frequently. Evil devices will never succeed in overcoming evil, no matter how ingenious they may be. It is the gentle power that conquers, not ostentation, not haughtiness, not the might of the sword and gun; it is the gentle spirit, the power of love, the power of forgiveness, and these qualities we all possess.

We cannot afford to touch evil. We cannot touch it without soiling our hands and minds and consciousness, without degrading ourselves. For this reason, the great Teachers, such as Christ and Buddha, gave us the watchword of non-resistance for our own safe-guarding. As we understand it, as we relate it with our life, and bring it into our daily activity, we shall find a great and ever-increasing benefit. We cannot benefit ourselves in the real sense without benefiting others. We cannot be true, good, kind, heroic and unselfish without helping others, for it is by our life, not by our word of mouth, that we shed blessing upon other lives.

Ah! dearest Jesus, Holy Child,
Make thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
Within my heart, that it may be
A quiet chamber kept for thee.

—*Luther.*

THE DIVINE LOADSTONE*By William Law*

(English mystic, 17th Century)

Heaven and hell have each of them their foundation within us; they come not into us from without, but spring up in us according as our will and heart are turned either to the Light of God or the kingdom of darkness. Thou needest not, therefore, run here or there, saying "Where is Christ?" For behold, the Word which is the wisdom of God is in thy heart; and as soon as thou art ready to hear, this eternal, speaking Word will speak wisdom and love in thy inward parts and bring forth the birth of Christ within thee.

There is but one salvation for all mankind, and that is the life of God in the soul. God has but one design or intent towards all mankind, and that is to introduce or generate His own Life, Light and Spirit in them, that all may be as so many images, temples and habitations of the Holy Trinity. This is God's will to all Christians, Jews and heathens. They are all equally the desire of His heart; His Light continually waits for an entrance into all of them; His "Wisdom crieth, she putteth forth her voice", not here or there, but everywhere, in all the streets of all the parts of the world.

Now there is but one possible way for man to attain this salvation, or life of God in the soul. There is not one for the Jew, another for a Christian and a third for the heathen. No; God is one, human nature is one, salvation is one, and the way to it is one; and that is, the desire of the soul turned to God. When this desire is alive and breaks forth in any creature under heaven, then the lost sheep is found and the shepherd hath it upon his shoulders. Thus does this desire do all: it brings the soul to God, and God into the

soul; it unites with God, it co-operates with God and is one life with God. Suppose this desire not to be alive, not in motion either in a Jew or a Christian, and then all the sacrifices, the service, the worship, either of the Law or the Gospel, are but dead works that bring no life into the soul, nor beget any union between God and it. Suppose this desire to be awakened and fixed upon God, though in souls that never heard either of the Law or Gospel, and then the divine life or operation of God enters into them, and the new birth in Christ is formed in those that never heard of His name.

O my God, just and good, how great is Thy love and mercy to mankind, that heaven is thus everywhere open and Christ thus the common Saviour to all that turn the desire of their hearts to Thee! O Holy Trinity, immense ocean of divine love, in which all mankind live and move and have their being! None are separated from Thee, none live out of Thy love, but all are embraced in the arms of Thy mercy, all are partakers of Thy divine life, the operation of Thy holy Spirit, as soon as their heart is turned to Thee. O plain and easy and simple way of salvation, wanting no subtleties of art or science, no borrowed learning, no refinements of reason, but all done by the simple, natural motion of every heart that truly longs after God.

When, therefore, the first spark of a desire after God arises in thy soul, cherish it with all thy care, give all thy heart into it; it is nothing less than a touch of the divine loadstone that is to draw thee out of the vanity of time into the riches of eternity. Get up, therefore, and follow it as gladly as the wise men of the East followed the star from heaven that appeared to them. It will do for thee as the star did for them; it will lead thee to the birth of Jesus, not in a stable at Bethlehem of Judea, but to the birth of Jesus in the dark centre of thine own fallen soul.

ARMOR OF LOVE

Compiled from the Writings of Mahatma M. K. Gandhi

In this age of the rule of brute force, it is almost impossible for any one to believe that any one else could possibly reject the law of brute force. Such being the hold that the doctrine of the sword has on the majority of mankind and as my views on this matter affect the conduct of a large number of people, I am anxious to state them as clearly as possible. I do believe that where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. Hence it was that I took part in the Boer war, the so-called Zulu rebellion and the late war. Hence, also, do I advocate training in arms for those who believe in the methods of violence. But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment. Forgiveness adorns a soldier; but it is meaningless when it pretends to proceed from a helpless creature. A mouse hardly forgives a cat when it allows itself to be torn to pieces by her. Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.

Purity is the only weapon of the weak. The strong in body, in their insolence often mobilize their "hard fibre" and seek to usurp the very function of the Almighty. But when that "hard fibre" comes in contact, not with its like, but with the exact opposite, it has nothing to work against. A solid body can only move on and against another solid body. You cannot build castles in the air. This terrific insolence can only be met by the utter humility of the pure and the meek. God helps the helpless, not those who believe they can do something. Let us therefore be strong in soul, though weak in body.

The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the Rishis and saints. It is meant for the common people as

well. Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law—to the strength of the Spirit. A correspondent asks, "Is it not true that the loss of Hindu kingdoms is on account of the people having attained to the highest order of spirituality?" I do not think so. We know, as a matter of fact, that the Hindus have lost each time for want of spirituality, in other words, moral stamina. We often confuse spiritual knowledge with spiritual attainment. Spirituality is not a matter of knowing Scriptures and engaging in philosophical discussions. It is a matter of heart-culture, of immeasurable strength. Fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality. Cowards can never be moral. I have therefore ventured to place before India the ancient law of self-sacrifice.

Non-violence in its dynamic condition means constant suffering. He serves best who suffers most; but it must be the willing suffering of the strong and not the unwilling suffering of the helpless weak. Christ died on the Cross with a crown of thorns on His head, defying the might of a whole empire. Suffering cheerfully endured ceases to be suffering and is transmuted into an ineffable joy. The man who flies from suffering is the victim of endless tribulation before it has come to him, and is half dead when it does come. But one who is cheerfully ready for anything and everything that comes, escapes all pain.

The spirit of non-violence necessarily leads to humility. Non-violence means reliance on God, the Rock of ages. If we would seek His aid we must approach Him with a humble and a contrite heart. We must act, even as the mango tree which droops as it bears fruit. Its grandeur lies in its majestic lowliness. Complete non-violence is complete ab-

sence of ill-will against all that lives. It is pure Love. I read it in the Hindu Scriptures, in the Bible, in the Koran. Non-violence is a perfect state. It is a goal towards which all mankind moves naturally though unconsciously. Man does not become divine when he personifies innocence in himself; only then does he become truly man. In our present state we are partly men and partly beasts and in our ignorance and even arrogance say that we truly fulfill the purpose of our species when we deliver blow for blow and develop the measure of anger required for the purpose. We pretend to believe that retaliation is the law of our being, whereas in every Scripture we find that retaliation is nowhere obligatory but only permissible. It is restraint that is obligatory. Retaliation is indulgence requiring elaborate regulating. Restraint is the law of our being, for highest perfection is unattainable without highest restraint. Suffering is thus the badge of the human tribe.

The goal ever recedes from us. The greater the progress, the greater the recognition of our own unworthiness. Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment. Full effort is full victory. Therefore though I realize more than ever how far I am from that goal, for me the Law of complete Love is the law of my being. Each time I fail my effort shall be all the more determined for my failure. The hardest fibre must melt in the fire of love. Let me declare my faith. I believe in loving my enemies. I believe in non-violence as the only remedy open to the Hindus, Mussalmans, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Jews of India. I believe in the power of suffering to melt the stoniest heart. Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Judaism,—in fact religion,—is on trial. Either we believe in God and His righteousness or we do not. No power on earth can stop the onward march of a peaceful, determined and godly people.

GOD-KNOWER AND GOD

From the Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna

According to certain philosophers the Absolute is the only Reality; the universe is unreal. From the point of view of the Absolute or the Undifferentiated, the universe and man and other creatures are unreal, for the only Reality is the Absolute. Such is the point of view of a non-dualist philosopher. Devotees or lovers of God, however, think and feel differently. Unlike the non-dualists, they look upon the waking state as a real state and upon the external world as real and not like dreams. They believe also in names and forms. They say that the objects before us of the universe are the works of God, Who is a personal God and possessed of many attributes. The starry heavens, the sun, the moon; the mountain, the sea; men, birds and beasts,—all are His glorious works.

True God-knowers are they who have realized God both as impersonal and personal. They have seen God both within and without and have received this revelation from Him direct. When the Supreme Being is thought of as inactive—neither creating, sustaining or destroying—I call Him the Impersonal God. When I think of Him as active—creating, sustaining, destroying—I call Him the Personal God or Divine Mother. But really the distinction is a distinction without a difference. The Impersonal and the Personal are one and the same Being, even as fire and its burning property are one. Ye cannot conceive the fire apart from its power of burning. They are one even as milk and the whiteness of milk are one. One cannot conceive the milk without the whiteness. They are one even as a gem and its brightness are one. They are one even as a serpent and its movement in a crooked line are one. Ye cannot conceive the serpent without its serpentine, tortuous motion. It is

through the changeable, phenomenal world that you must feel your way to the Unchangeable, the Unconditioned. When the Personal God or Divine Mother wipeth out your ego in divine vision, God the Absolute is realized and it is all silence and whatever is, is there.

DE SANCTO SPIRITU

By Adam de Saint Victor

(French monk and writer of Latin hymns, 12th Century)

Bright Light, dear Light, thou dost put to flight the gloom of inner darkness: by thee the worlds are purified. Thou dost destroy sin and the blight of sin. Thou dost make known the truth, and dost show the way of peace and the road of justice; thou dost shun the hearts of the evil, and dost enrich the hearts of the good with the gift of knowledge. When thou dost teach, nothing is obscure; when thou art present, then is naught impure: at thy presence our joyful soul exults; our conscience, gladdened by thee, purified by thee, rejoices.

When thou dost come, thou dost soften our hearts; when thou dost enter them, the black clouds of darkness flee. O sacred fire, thou dost inflame our breast; thou dost not burn it, but thou dost cleanse it from all earthly cares when thou dost visit it. Thou dost instruct and arouse minds that before were ignorant and buried in sleep and forgetfulness. Thou dost help our tongues, and dost form the sound of our word; the grace given by thee makes our heart inclined to the good.

O help of the oppressed, O comfort of the wretched, refuge of the poor! Grant us contempt for things of earth; draw our desires to the love of things of heaven. Drive away evil, remove our impurity, make the discordant concordant, and bring us thy protection.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(The introduction appeared in July, 1924. Subsequent chapters in successive numbers.)

CHAP. XIV.

WORK AND TRAVELS IN EUROPE—Concluded

Letters continued to come from Florence telling of the Swami's work. One reads: "I have been translating the Bhagavad-Gita. I dictate and Mme. B. writes it down. Five chapters are already finished. This idea came to me while I was in Gryon." And another: "Our meeting here was quite satisfactory on Saturday. Lecturing is certainly the smallest part of the work. The main thing is to sow the seed. Those who are ready will feel the living quality just from the Presence without words. Divine Mother knows her work and I am always ready to do Her will. This afternoon the Gita class begins. Everything is so sympathetic here. Children are so sweet and dear. They all come to bid me good-night every evening with their mother when the candles and incense burn on the altar. It is just like a daily service for them—and gives such a joy to me. Divine Mother knows her own and when she attracts no power can resist it. Blessed are those who are attracted to be blessed!

Although the work in Florence had begun with so much promise, the Swami realized, when he returned to Boston, that it was not possible to carry on two Centres separated by a broad ocean. His decision was a disappointment to many, above all to his hostess of the Villa B. When she heard it, she wrote: "The Swami's work is for the world, for all, thus he must ever pass on to new fields. It is for us whose hearts have had the privilege to be opened to receive the blessing of his words to retain it. The room where he had his altar, I go there every morning and late afternoon to pray. My little girl joins me in the afternoon and then

I read to her, by the light of the altar candles, the 'Path of Devotion,' which she loves. The interest that the Swami's lectures awakened here is growing in many hearts. The German translation of the 'Path of Devotion' which a dear friend of mine has undertaken is really marvellously well done. She has understood the spirit of it most profoundly."

In one of these letters the Swami speaks of translating the Bhagavad-Gita. This translation from the Sanskrit text was the most important achievement of his autumn sojourn in Florence. As with everything he does, it began spontaneously and without calculation or planning. His host and hostess had a translation by a Western scholar, which was so confusing that they brought it to the Swami to clarify. He soon grew weary of bending back into shape the distorted text and began making his own translation, which his hostess wrote down for her personal use. One or two others assisted at the informal class and they were all so impressed with the beauty of the Swami's rendering that they urged him to publish it. The translation was made in the short interval of six weeks.

The Swami returned to Europe the following March (1913) as the guest of his German friends, Mr. and Mrs. S. They met him at Naples and they spent a holiday of several weeks at Capri. Then they moved northward by gradual stages, making various stops on the way. The next letter came from Switzerland and was dated April twenty-first: "Here I am once more in Gryon. Sometimes I have felt like returning to Boston at once. But the Lord will surely make His will known. Mr. and Mrs. S. want me to come to Gottingen. They will also invite others to come and discuss the plan of our work in Germany. We talked about starting a Centre in Berlin, but my thoughts have been very strongly on finishing what we have already undertaken in Boston.

I see many advantages in starting a work in Europe and also I see many difficulties in trying to create one."

The Swami's mind at all times rested very lightly on the outer current of his life. The under-flow of his thoughts was always far away from worldly concerns and we touch its depths in the words which came a few days later: "It is a great pity when people miss an opportunity out of thoughtlessness or otherwise. Everything depends on Divine Mother's Will and Grace. Bondage and freedom both are in Her hands. Those who pray humbly and earnestly, theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Egotism lends no access there; it only prevents our going to that blissful abode. As long as this demon in the form of ego rules in us, so long our striving for spiritual things will prove fruitless. I am realizing more and more every day why all sages laid such great stress on this: 'Man has no other enemy than his ego.' This is absolutely true. When this great enemy is conquered then alone one realizes how majestic the soul is. All our limitations and sorrows, all our littleness and imperfections arise from this one source. It is the absence of ego which fills our hearts with purity, humility, love, peace and with all the blessed qualities.

"Through the Grace of the Divine may you all taste the nectar of *Anandam* or Bliss to be found in the egoless state. May Mother protect you all is my constant prayer. I have been enjoying the simple life and quiet here very much but work must be done when the call comes. My earnest prayer is that God may give you strength and wisdom to follow ably what is best for your welfare and for those who look to you for help. This world cannot prove dangerous when our heart is steadfastly fixed in God, but without love of God and His Mercy life is altogether unsafe and full of peril. Pray to Him earnestly for light; try to do your

duties with non-attachment; practise purity and self-control in all your thoughts, words and actions; this will give you peace."

He went to Geneva as he had planned and on May fourth he writes from there: "I arrived here last Tuesday evening. Friday evening I gave my first lecture. From the next day I began a course of talks on Bhagavad-Gita at the studio of Madame Van N. where I am stopping. This is a very old-fashioned place but any place is good enough for my simple needs. They are rather anxious to form a Centre here and they have been asking many questions regarding it. There is little time these days for writing. Much activity is going on, but He alone can do His work." The next letter reads: "Yesterday morning the publisher came and I have arranged about the French translation of the 'Path of Devotion'. This afternoon will be my ninth talk here, all given in about a week's time, and just as many interviews. I must say that my body has shown real endurance. A Class has been formed for the study of Vedanta which will be held once a week."

Paris followed Geneva; but on his way he went to Gyon for a few days' rest and he writes: "I returned to Gyon to-day at three o'clock. It seems so beautiful to be here again in this quiet spot. Yesterday we had a very interesting meeting at the house of the distinguished gentleman of Geneva. It was very successful. I met several professors and they all expressed great appreciation. Mr. S., a very broad-minded clergyman, wants to translate the 'Teachings of Christ and Oriental Ideals' and publish it in his magazine first and then publish it in book form. It will be a good thing to have for work among French-speaking people. The Lord alone knows His work, we can only try to make ourselves fitting instruments in His Hands. It was quite

strenuous in Geneva, but beginning of everything requires display of great strength and devotion. Some good may come out of it." Among the professors the Swami met at this gentleman's house was Professor Oltramare, the well-known Orientalist. Other members of the Faculty of the University of Geneva also attended the lectures.

The Swami's strenuous activities in Geneva were by no means unfruitful. His transforming touch fell on many lives and roused them to new fervor, calling forth such expressions of thankfulness as this: "In a few simple words may this letter be the token of our deepfelt gratitude and love to you for the great blessing your presence and teaching have brought us, who have had the privilege of coming beneath them, here in Geneva. May our gratitude and love be translated into faithful work in the service of the Supreme Being, as you have given us the example; and in the way you have instructed us. May love and tolerance guide us in the real spirit of humility to realize and impart the sense of Truth in study and meditation where self is lost in Light."

The Swami sent one more letter from Gryon. "If you work with pure and whole-hearted devotion," it reads, "it must all go well and you will feel more blessed every day. The strength of the Boston Centre has been harmony and tolerance. To bring even a shadow of anything else would be to weaken it. The work will surely grow strong if we all learn to stand together. The spirit of self-surrender and prayer will enable us to accomplish this."

For sometime the Swami had been in correspondence with a lady in Paris who was eager to have him come there, remain for several months and deliver an extended course of lectures. She writes him in the early days of June 1913: "The way seems to be opening very pleasantly for your

welcome here. There is an artist who has offered her large studio for the meetings, situated on a park in a very desirable part of Paris, connected with the Bois de Boulogne. This same lady will be delighted to have you stay in her home. It is a fine large house. You will be quite free there. As my friend has been in India, you will find it a congenial atmosphere. It is quite wonderful the number of souls who are awaiting this teaching here. I saw in the Paris Herald that there is in Paris a society recently formed, under the patronage of President Poincare, of members of the Sorbonne to invite the speakers of the highest planes of civilization to address Parisian audiences. We shall announce your coming to President Poincare asking him to notify those who would like to meet you."

The Swami delivered two public lectures in Paris and met with an immediate and most sympathetic response. The delicacy and grace of his method of presenting his message, the depth and penetrating quality of his thought and his great spiritual charm made a strong appeal to the subtle French mind. The French intellect is at all times so piercing and transcendent that it seems to hover on the threshold of the spiritual. It was therefore able to sense the Swami's unobtrusive lofty wisdom. It seemed as if a new and fertile field was opening before him; but the urge to return to Boston and devote himself with renewed energy to the Centre there grew too irresistible to be ignored. He cut short his Parisian season and sailed for America in a few weeks. Europe, however, was as insistent as Boston. Demands for lectures and Centres were continuous and cumulative. With each visit they multiplied. The Geneva group also were pleading with him to return. Another summer in Europe seemed inevitable. June (1914) therefore found the Swami again crossing the Atlantic: writing on board the steamer:

“So far the trip has been beautiful. Last night, I gave an address on ‘Religious Ideal for This Age’ before a large audience. You see it is very difficult for me to get over my long Sunday habit. . . . I hope all is going well with you and the Centre. Just be brave and have patience. Patience conquers everything in the end. Our moods and feelings are only momentary—they come and go, being fleeting in nature, therefore we must try to endure them and look upon them as a witness. Never tear down your peace and happiness unnecessarily. Never lose faith in yourself. I pray that Mother may make your faith ever stronger and stronger and give you joy, selflessness and true devotion.”

The next news came from Geneva and was dated July second, 1914: “I arrived here safely after a long and dusty train ride of eleven hours and a half from Paris. I was met at the station by Mrs. Van N. and Mr. Reelfs, who brought me here to this beautiful country home of Mr. Selleger. The hospitality I am receiving from this household is simply overwhelming. Mr. Selleger is an old gentleman of eighty-four and he is a wonderful soul. He and his daughter used to come to hear me last year. I often observed their earnest faces but did not dream that they would invite me to stay with them. It is so peaceful and quiet here. I have almost a whole chalet to myself with a bath. They really know how to live comfortably and simply without the extravagance of unnecessary luxury which consumes so much time and strength. I am more and more impressed with this fact, as I come to Europe year after year. They are all strict vegetarians in this family and Miss Selleger yesterday cooked me a most delicious meal of boiled rice, macaroni and stewed lettuce with a sauce. I feel as if I am receiving hospitality from an Indian household.”

A letter of July third reads: "These have been very full days. To-morrow morning I am starting for Gryon. There I shall probably have some real rest. But we can never tell. Divine Mother may have some more surprises for me, as my reception at Geneva seemed like a real surprise from Her. Knowing these people may mean a possible opening for Holland. Miss Selleger has already spoken to me about it. Her brother as well as her brother-in-law who lives in Holland are both interested and are anxious to meet me. Most of the audience here is made up of Russians and Dutch. There is no doubt that plenty of people here are earnestly interested. I have promised them that I would come back in September and stay longer. People have been showing deep feeling and some of them have come steadily twice a day—long distances, too."

(Note: Owing to lack of further space it is impossible to complete the present narrative in the "Message". It will soon go to press and will appear in book form with seven or eight additional chapters and numerous illustrations.)

VEDANTA ACTIVITIES

The Vedanta Centre of Boston has continued its work uninterruptedly during Swami Paramananda's absences in the west. At these times Services and Classes are conducted by Miss Galeni Philadelphus who by her consecrated spirit preserves the serene and lovely atmosphere always associated with the Boston work. On November 4th the Swami spoke for the Wollaston Woman's Club, near Boston, on "Right Thinking and Right Living." His handling of the subject was so practical that the president remarked at the close, "Are we not all surprised; we did not expect anything like this." At the request of the members the Swami concluded with the reading of some of his poems.

* * * * *

It is with great pleasure that we report the establishing of a Vedanta Society at Portland, Oregon, by Swami

Prabhavananda, assistant to Swami Prakashananda of the Hindu Temple, San Francisco. The new Centre was dedicated on November 8th by the two San Francisco Swamis, who conducted an impressive ceremony at the new room acquired for the purposes of the Portland work. We wish it well.

* * * * *

During November Swami Paramananda visited both Cincinnati and St. Louis on his way between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. At both places he was given a warm welcome and addressed large and appreciative audiences.

* * * * *

Ananda-Ashrama was without the Swami's presence during the first part of November. He returned, however, in ample time to celebrate Thanksgiving with a special Service in the morning, held in the patio, and a dinner in the afternoon, cooked by the Swami and served out under the open sky. Many came and felt that for the first time they had touched the true spirit of Thanksgiving.

* * * * *

Grace Church, New York City, was the setting for a truly momentous occasion when, on October 26th, the Swami as guest of honor for the Fellowship of Faiths spoke before an audience of over a thousand people. The evening was dedicated to Judaism and the Swami showed how only by going within and more within could one grasp the significance of any faith. The opening of the doors of Grace Church for such a purpose was, he said, symbolic of the times. The response to the Swami was deep and spontaneous. As a friend writes: "Although the president of the meeting had asked the people not to clap in the church, the feeling was so heartfelt that the audience burst out clapping when Swami finished his lecture." The following day a luncheon was given in honor of the Swami. This new contact opens many possibilities for Vedanta work in New York as it has brought the Swami into sympathetic touch with prominent leaders of thought,—ministers, rabbis and metaphysical workers.

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GIFT
JAN 21 1926

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



JANUARY, 1926

WHO IS A MASTER?

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tyndall.

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JANUARY, 1926

No. 1

PRAYER



LET us lift our thoughts and prayers to that one and only Source of our life, Source of our existence, Giver of all strength and beneficence.

Let us approach Him with noiseless, unostentatious, gentle feeling of heart and mind.

Let us close the gates, the avenues, to all that distracts us and distracts our vision that we may conceive a clear, a definite conception of that great Presence within us.

Let us shake off from our mind the imperfections arising from our contact with the sense-world, forgetting our own limitations and forgetting the limitations of others, that our mind and heart may become single and one-pointed in our journey towards Him.

May all our prayers be answered. May our heart's yearning lead us to our goal.

May He Who is all-seeing, all-loving, inspire us and fill our heart and mind with His love.

Let us open the avenues of our inner being that we may not, through our imperfect nature, prove unworthy to receive His blessings.

May He, the Giver of all, Bestower of all, loving and compassionate,—compassionate even towards those who have many lacks,—may He surround us with His tender protection and keep us ever in peace.

Peace, Peace, Peace be unto us and to all living beings.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Wherever the superior man passes through, transformation follows; wherever he abides his influence is of a spiritual nature. It flows abroad, above and beneath like that of heaven and earth. How can it be said that he mends society but in a small way?—*Mencius*.

Christ is nothing else than love, simplicity, patience, purity,—in short all that He Himself is; and the devil is nothing but that which draws us away from these ideals.

—*Erasmus*.

Lovely is the spirit that will give his days to bring beauty to his brothers who are lost upon earth's ways.

—*John Masefield*

Wherever a self-controlled man dwells, that is a forest, that is an hermitage.—*Max Muller*.

Love, that lives and breathes without desire;
Wisdom freed from thought's consuming fire,
Will at one with God, that doth aspire

But to obey Him in simplicity. —*Jacopone da Todi*.

All our spirits, O my people, must become one spirit, united mightily as one only selfsame spirit. And if there-to we attain not, the fault, ah, it lieth not in the order of our being, not in the decree of the gods. In us alone it lieth: are we earnest? sincere? are we true? and truly kind? We have not fixed, O children, our minds with a common brotherly desire; we are not one single yearning heart lifted up to heaven in prayer; and therefore, Tirawa Atius, our Heavenly Father, Who dwelleth in the zenith, may not, woe is me, bless us His children as He is so fain to bless.—*Pawnee Indian*.

For the man who makes everything that leads to happiness, or near to it, to depend upon himself, and not upon other men, on whose good or evil actions his own doings are compelled to hinge,—such a one, I say, has adopted the very best plan for living happily. This is the man of moderation; this is the man of a manly character, and of wisdom.—*Plato*.

The man who is kind and who practises righteousness, who remains passive amidst the affairs of the world, who considers all creatures on earth as his own self, he attains the Immortal Being, the true God is ever with him.

—*Kabir*.

If one would be very spiritual, it behoveth him to renounce both them that be afar and them that are nigh and of none so much to be ware as of himself. If thou overcome thyself perfectly thou shalt the more lightly put under foot all other things. It is perfect victory for a man to overcome himself. If any keep himself so under that sensuality obeys reason and reason Me in all things he shall be a true victor of himself and lord of the world. On this vice that a man loveth himself too inordinately hangs everything almost that is utterly to be overcome; the which evil overcome and put under forthwith there shall be great peace and tranquillity.—*Imitation of Christ*.

What else can I, a lame old man, do but sing hymns to God? Were I a nightingale, I would act the part of a nightingale; a swan, the part of a swan; but since I am a reasonable creature it is my duty to praise God. This is my business. I do it. Nor will I ever desert this post as long as it is vouchsafed me; and I exhort you to join in the same song.—*Epictetus*.

WHO IS A MASTER?

By Swami Paramananda

What I am going to give you is not a fanciful idea of a master. There is a significant saying by Laotze giving utterance to the voice of universal freedom: "He who, conscious of his own light, is content to be obscure, he shall be the whole world's model. Being the whole world's model, his virtue will never fail. He reverts to the Absolute." This is precisely the definition of a master. He never wants to rule. He never wants to assert himself. In fact he has no more voice of the individual left in him, and therefore he becomes a mouthpiece for the outpouring of the universal law. Do you suppose that Christ was called a master merely because He gathered around Him a few disciples? That was not the reason He was so called, it was because He had achieved the conquest over His own self. The little self was conquered and in its place shone the light of God. That is the interpretation I want to give you, not the picture of some mysterious being living in the Himalayas or an Egyptian forest.

We may find masters; but the real finding must be within. Unless we have found our victory over self, our mastery over self, we may have all the great Lights of the world shining right before us and yet not see them or be aware of them, because we are conscious only of the little glitter of selfishness and egotism, blurring our sight for anything else whatsoever in the world.

All religions uphold an ideal. It is a wonderful thing. No one should seek to discredit another's ideal. We protest against God when we protest against any part of God. If you say, "that man's ideal is not pertaining to God because it is not of my creed", then you are creating a God of tradition, an idol, a very limited being. This question of su-

premacy never arises in the realm of pure spiritual life, philosophy and religion. We are very blessed when we can pour out our heart's devotion to some ideal, when we can bow before it, when we can really throw down the disturbing element of self in adoration, in the supreme recognition of our spiritual entity. Not that the great world teachers demand of us anything. They are not at all conscious of such things. Often I like to think of the beautiful incidents in the life of Christ, the Master-Spirit. Whenever He performed a miracle, whenever He gave healing to a soul and redeemed it, and men came and threw themselves down before Him in humility and worship, how His mind turned to the Source of all things! And that is the master.

To assert our voice and become domineering, to have a little following, is not the spirit of mastery. A master is one who has gained such conquest over himself that no more may the sting of self enter into his consciousness. Such a being is a benediction. This is the great lesson that the master-spirits of the world bring to us. They come, not in order to teach us to attain to some creed or dogma, to become fanatical or quarrelsome; they come so that we may learn to find our access to spiritual reality; so that instead of asserting our self-will, saying, this is mine and that is mine and you are not within my realm,—we may revert to that Absolute Being in utter self-surrender.

It is not through division and disorder that we learn of religion and spiritual philosophy. It is rather by finding a point of contact, and in order to find this point of contact with the universe we first have to find it within. It is useless for us to try to establish something for the betterment of humanity, or to seek peace, harmony and order, until we have found these within our own self. If you

go to some one with an idea or an invention, he will want to see what you have done, how much you have accomplished, what results you can show. The same way it is in the spiritual realm. You may talk to a group of people, you may tell them that there is nothing so wonderful as self-mastery and how marvelous it is for a person to have control over his temper so that he always maintains a calm spirit; but people will learn from you only and exactly in the measure that you exhibit these qualities through your life, your actions and your dealings with others. These are the lessons which make their imprint on our life in our moments of weakness, doubt and despondency.

The greatest service the master-spirits do for us is this. They inspire in us our lost hope; they quicken in us that divine life which in many of us seems to exist now almost in the form of deadness. This life they infuse in us, and that is the reason why we should always have gratitude towards these great souls. And how beautiful it is that they are so absolutely free from any self-seeking! Here lies the difference between the world and spiritual reality. The world-interest desires only for itself. When a man has one kingdom he wants another; and when he has another he wants still another; and so he goes on multiplying kingdoms, and with them trouble and turbulence. The spirit-man, however, gives up everything he has, and by giving up acquires immensity of life. You may ask: "Can we dare such a thing? Can we dare to give ourselves up? Can we dare to forget ourselves? What will happen?" These are the thoughts which hinder our progress, which bar our door, our access, into the heart of Divinity. Therefore the spiritual life begins with the selfless spirit.

A person who starts with resolute mind to follow the path of wisdom, he never finds fault with another. If there is anything lacking he tries to adjust it from within. It is the life within that opens infinite vistas for us. We learn not to quarrel with others, not to find fault with others, or even have an attitude of self-pity. Sometimes we have these thoughts playing within us. We are either finding fault with the whole world, or we have this morbid self-pitying attitude. In both conditions we are forgetful of the ultimate. Who are we? What are we? Are we **self-sufficing**? Are we the sole agents of our life and action? Herein lies the whole secret of life, religion and practical wisdom. When a man has connected himself with the Source he can give out continuously and still find a tremendous amount to give; while another person may start with great exuberance but will soon become exhausted because of his self-limitation. The master-spirits of the world are those who are never unmindful of the Source, of the Ultimate.

Wherein lies our self-limitation? We are successful in life, we have opportunities; but we are inclined to forget the One Who has given us our opportunities, Who has bestowed on us power and success, and then comes our **calamity**. Sometimes we are a great inspiration to another: some one has received help through us, and that person comes and tells us. Immediately we think that we are the one who has done this and we begin to have a tremendous feeling of self-importance. Then that power is entirely cut off from us. This is where Christ gives a lesson, and Buddha and St. Francis. They are master-spirits, not yielding to the self, not yielding to the momentary gratifications of life which they know are transitory, passing; but always with faithful ardour standing up for that which is

true and real. Here lies man's choice. When he gains victory over this self there is nothing that can defeat him or need worry him.

This our life here is absolutely inter-related with the spiritual Source and our misfortune is that we forget this. Man thinks his hands and feet have only so much capacity, that his mind can only carry so much and beyond that he should not undertake anything. In this way we make ourselves slaves of circumstances. We are attached to this and that without always keeping our mind focussed on the ultimate issue. If, however, we do succeed in doing this, then little things cannot touch us. We may ask, is it practical for a man to keep his mind on spiritual things? No matter what form of religion he may follow where will he find time to give himself to his duties, to his family, to his many obligations? There is no duty to ourselves, to others or to humanity greater than the duty to God. It may sound old-fashioned; but it is neither new nor old.

A person cannot continue to live and flourish and exhibit those powers which he is craving if he disconnects himself from the Source of life and sustenance. He may want happiness; but he cannot have happiness until he has found the way of happiness. He may have a tremendous ambition to attain it; but he cannot attain it till he has found a working hypothesis. Therefore, again we have to turn to the old-fashioned, the eternal principle: "First seek ye the kingdom of God within." If you are successful in finding your access there, if you are living in harmony there, then there is nothing that can defeat you. That is the law of life, and the great master-spirits of the world teach us this,—the abandonment of outer things. We may not be able to abandon all outer things at once. In our spiritual infancy we are given plenty of opportunities and

ample allowance is made for us; but we must prove that we have yearning.

In the realm of religion man cannot pretend. We can perhaps pretend other things, but here is something that must ring true. It must coincide with our life, and unless it so coincides we lose our grasp. We may become great fanatics; we may even fight one another, thinking we are defending our faith; but that is not the way to defend it. Defending our faith, spreading our faith, extending it to a larger humanity, means that it must be well-grounded in our own soul so that we can never forget it. We may have symbols, we may build churches, we may have all the great Bibles of the world in our library, but that will not suffice. It is from within that our strength comes, and this is where we have to exert ourselves. We cannot take a morbid attitude and say, "God's will be done." It is a very beautiful thing when a person comes to that point where he can say, "God's will be done"; when he can take that stand and remain firm; when even under pain and suffering he can stand up and say, "Thy will be done". But who can do this? Only one who has become a master, one who has truly freed himself and that is our aim and ideal.

There is no happiness for the slave. If we are slaves to attachment, envy, greed, ambition or any form of self-seeking it is useless for us to seek happiness. Attachment will always bring unhappiness. Ambition will always bring unhappiness. It will bring feverish unrest within the soul. You may have everything you desire and for which you have worked; but even when you have found all that you have worked for and more, you will fail to find the end that you are striving for. This is something that we must consid-

er. A person who is a slave of self, he may have the whole world at his command, and yet he is not satisfied. "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul, and what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" How simply, how directly, how definitely it is stated: "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world." Can we afford to give ourselves wholly to the world? If we do we become its slaves. One who is attached to the things of the world is at the mercy of the world. That is the law, but one who is not attached to the world, one whose heart and soul, body and mind, whose whole being is consecrated and dedicated to his Maker, the world cannot harm him. There are some people who not only flourish in this world themselves, but they hold up a standard for other travellers. We see a person going with lightness of step, with great freedom and those who are weary, worn out and burdened, they realize at once that such freedom is possible and it gives them a new impetus.

We must lighten our burden. You have seen mountain climbers how careful they are what they carry. If they carry too much it hinders their progress and they cannot reach their destination. Same way it is with our life when we burden ourselves with non-essentials through attachment, through slavery to habit, through bondage, through selfishness. All these things spring from only one source, —ignorance. It is not an impossible thing for us to destroy ignorance. That is where we must lay our stress, and not on complaining because other people seem to interfere with our having fulfillment. We must see things in a different light. Therefore to me that person is a master who is not thwarted by others. Calamities do not depress him; people find fault with him, but that does not trouble him; they maltreat him, misjudge him, misunderstand him and

yet he goes on. And wherefrom does he get his strength? He gets his strength from within, and that is the real strength for life. Those of us who seek from outside, we are disappointed. Man tries to establish his home, his happiness, on the outside and it fails him; it passes away. He is disappointed, he is crushed, he has lost all faith in God and in humanity. He becomes a wreck because he has misplaced his trust.

That which is first, we must give first place, but it is not so easy for the individual who is distracted, who dissipates his energies. We are bound by a thousand self-created fetters, and we say, who is going to save us? Each time we send out a hateful thought we bind ourselves. We may come to a state of more or less indifference to these things. We may blunt our feelings, but nevertheless the condition is there. We keep on tying ourselves hand and foot until our mind and everything about us becomes so tremendously bound that we are suffocated and the soul cries out for freedom. Here and there are lights, shining souls who have freed themselves from self. The greatest struggle is with the self. This is something we have to understand. It is not merely by making the affirmation, "I am this; I am that", that a person can wholly find his liberation. He has to remember his relationship with the Source.

In Christ's teaching we are given two incidents. In one place the Christ says, "I and my Father are one". This is identical with some of the ancient thoughts which we find in the Vedic revelation and in the Greek school, "I am one with that Absolute Being; I am That". Christ, of course, speaks the truth, because He is so filled with the divine consciousness that He has no more self-consciousness left. Then he comes to another phase of spiritual consciousness, when He altogether lays down the self and says,

"I am nothing—not my will but Thine be done". It may seem like a tremendous gulf between these two statements,—one moment a man saying, I am everything, there is no death, no disease, nothing can thwart me; and then the next moment the self-same person saying, I am nothing, Thou art all. But there can be no gulf where there is selfless spirit. The element of self-mastery, of victory, of self-assertion, is very pleasing to the individual. It is stimulating and sometimes it is helpful.

In the Vedic Upanishads there are those beautiful sayings: I have no sin, sorrow cannot touch me, I am part of that great Absolute. When we feel depressed by conditions even the thought of these will lift us up, but we must remain uplifted and that means that our life must co-incide with these ideals. Therefore it is not the aggressor, not the egotist, not the man who is inconsistent, who can find lasting consolation in these thoughts; but only one who has given his life, who has blended it with the Source of life without any more thought of division. He has found the light and he has really become the model of the world, like Christ, Buddha, St. Francis and many others.. Such pure souls are the great masters because they have no thought of ruling over any one. They have no thought of gaining anything, no more selfishness, no more self-interest. How do they come to it? They come step by step. They come here as men, walking with men, becoming the brother of man, struggling, striving, sometimes expressing pain through their faces, showing all the phases of struggle and aspiration, until finally they attain the conquest of self. Once this is reached, there is no more failure, no more defeat. He who has gained mastery over self, nothing can defeat him. We must make our life blend with those attributes which are revealed through the master-spirits of the great world.

FOUNTAIN OF GOODNESS*By St. Catherine of Sienna*

One day as the blessed Catherine of Sienna was praying, our Lord appeared to her and said: "Daughter, knowest thou what thou art and what I am? If thou perfectly know this truth thou art blessed. Give heed then to my words, that thou mayest be able to understand it. Thou art she that is not, and I am He who am. Art thou not she who was made out of nothing? For as much as every creature is made out of nothing and has no being save in My almighty power, and evermore of itself tends to nothing, now if a man were thoroughly persuaded of this, that in truth he were nothing, how could he be proud or how could he glory in himself or in any of his works if he knew that he had nothing of his own but defects and sin? But because if he considered this truth alone he would fall away into despair, therefore it is needful also that he know that I am He that am.

God only is, of Himself. He alone is unchangeable and incorruptible. The creature, therefore, that sees this, and knows that he can have no being in himself, or find any good or blessedness in himself or any other creature, turns himself to God and beholds Him, the Creator and Preserver of all things, Who maintains all things in their being and blessedness, the everlasting Spring and Fountain of all goodness, Who alone is able to slake the thirst of his natural desires and longings. And so beholding Him, the creature begins to sigh towards Him and to be inflamed with the love of Him. And he conceives a certain holy fear which is the guardian of the soul, so that he will not suffer the least motion in his heart which could offend so sweet and bountiful a Master. And he rests so firmly on the provident goodness of God that no adversity disturbs

him, because he knows that Almighty God permits it for his salvation; and he understands that there is no labour or sorrow in this world, however grievous, that can be compared to the glorious reward which he looks for from the hands of God.

SURRENDER AND PEACE

By Arthur Schopenhauer

All willing arises from want; therefore from deficiency, and therefore from suffering. The satisfaction of a wish ends it; yet for one wish that is satisfied there remain at least ten which are denied. Further, the desire lasts long, the demands are infinite; the satisfaction is short and scantily measured out. But even the final satisfaction is itself only apparent; every satisfied wish at once makes room for a new one: both are illusions; the one is known to be so, the other not yet. No attained object of desire can give lasting satisfaction, but merely a fleeting gratification; it is like the alms thrown to the beggar, that keeps him alive to-day that his misery may be prolonged to the morrow. Therefore so long as consciousness is filled by our will, so long as we are given up to the throng of desires with their constant hopes and fears, so long as we are the subject of willing,—we can never have lasting happiness or peace. It is essentially all the same whether we pursue or flee, fear injury or seek enjoyment: the care for the constant demands of the will, in whatever form it may be, continually occupies and sways the consciousness. Without peace no true well-being is possible.

But when some external cause or inward disposition lifts us suddenly out of the endless stream of willing,—delivers knowledge from the slavery of the will,—the attention is no longer directed to the motives of willing, but compre-

hends things free from their relation to the will, and thus observes them without personal interest. Then all at once the peace which we were always seeking, but which always fled from us on the former path of the desires, comes to us of its own accord; and it is well with us. It is the painless state which Epicurus prized as the highest good, and as the state of the gods; for we are for the moment set free from the miserable striving of the will.

Thus between desiring and attaining, all human life flows on throughout. The wish is, in its nature, pain; the attainment soon begets satiety, the end was only apparent; possession takes away the charm. The wish, the need, presents itself under a new form; when it does not, then follow desolateness, emptiness, ennui,—against which the conflict is just as painful as against want. True salvation—deliverance from life and suffering—cannot even be imagined without complete denial of the will. Till then every one is simply this will itself. If it should be absolutely insisted upon that in some way or other a positive knowledge should be attained of that which philosophy can only express negatively as the denial of the will, there would be nothing for it but to refer to that state which all those who have attained to complete denial of the will have experienced, and which has been variously denoted by the names ecstasy, rapture, illumination, union with God, and so forth; a state, however, which cannot properly be called knowledge, because it has not the form of subject and object, and is moreover only attainable in one's own experience and cannot be further communicated.

We, however, who consistently occupy the standpoint of philosophy must be satisfied here with negative knowledge,—content to have reached the utmost limit of the positive. We have recognized the inmost nature of the world as will,

and all its phenomena as only the objectivity from the unconscious working of obscure forces of nature up to the completely conscious action of man. Therefore we shall by no means evade the consequence, that with the free denial, the surrender of the will, all those phenomena are also abolished. Before us there is certainly only nothingness. But that which resists this passing into nothing—our nature—is indeed just the will to live which we ourselves are, as it is our world. That we abhor annihilation so greatly is simply another expression of the fact that we so strenuously will life, and are nothing but this will, and know nothing besides it. But if we turn our glance from our own needy and embarrassed condition to those who have overcome the world; in whom the will, having attained to the perfect self-knowledge, found itself again in all, and then freely denied itself; then instead of the restless striving and effort, instead of the constant transition from wish to fruition and from joy to sorrow, instead of the never satisfied and never-dying hope which constitutes the life of the man who wills, we shall see that peace which is above all reason, that perfect calm of the spirit, that deep rest, that inviolable confidence and serenity, the mere reflection of which in the countenance is an entire and certain gospel.

Thus, in this way, by contemplation of the life and conduct of saints,—whom it is certainly rarely granted us to meet with in our own experience, but who are brought before our eyes by their written history, and with the stamp of inner truth, by art,—we must banish the dark impression of that nothingness which we discern behind all virtue and holiness as their final goal, and which we fear as children fear the dark. We must not even evade it like the Indians, through myths and meaningless words, such

as reabsorption in Brahma or the Nirvana of the Buddhists. Rather do we freely acknowledge that what remains after the entire abolition of will is, for all those who are still full of will, certainly nothing; but conversely, to those in whom the will has turned and has denied itself, this our world which is so real, with all its suns and Milky Ways, is nothing.

(NOTE:—Schopenhauer has always been regarded as a pessimistic philosopher; but in this article compiled from "The World as Will and Idea", he is merely stating a spiritual truth as old as the world: the eradication of self and selfishness, of all craving for personal gratification. That which tinges his words with melancholy is the fact that he sees and states this truth from its negative, renunciatory aspect rather than from its positive aspect of spiritual fulfillment. This he admits. He realized the necessity of the desireless state but had not experienced its bliss, therefore his words are darkened by the shadow-side of sacrifice. The same charge of annihilation was made against the Buddha, merely because he could not convey to a sense-bound world a state of being beyond the senses, "beyond mind and speech". This has been the struggle of all great Teachers,—to interpret in the terms of the finite the experience of the Infinite. As Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad-Gita: "That which is night to all beings, therein the self-subjugated remains awake; and in that where all beings are awake, that is night for the knower of Self." Schopenhauer's concluding words are almost an echo of this. Thus when we read his negation of all that we call life and being, we must remember that Christ's words, "He that findeth his life shall lose it", might well chill the heart were they not followed by the promise: "and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

Sri Krishna gives desire as the great enemy in this life but he reassures his disciple Arjuna by telling him that all longings drop off when one has seen the Supreme. "He who is free from desire and free from grief with mind and senses tranquil, beholds the glory of the *Atman* (the Supreme)", runs the teaching of the great Vedic Upanishads, but adds that "He who thinks he knows It, knows It not, and he who thinks he knows It not, knows It." Spiritual truth is of the very essence of simplicity and spiritual teaching can be reduced to such simple terms that humanity passes over it because of its simplicity.

There is just one barrier to divine vision and that is egotism,—the sense of self and separateness. When that is reduced to the vanishing point; when all that is left of Self is a cohesive force sufficient to hold the individuality together so that it may manifest Deity, then man and God blend in conscious unity and there is no longer, lustful craving, the sense of thine and mine, but an ineffable consciousness of oneness and glory flooding through the illumined mind and heart into the world of men. Without selflessness all other methods must prove fruitless, for no occult practices, philosophic formulas, breathing exercises or postures can raise the veil on infinitude before eyes that are blinded by the delusion of self.)

Kutadanta said: "How shall I find the path to life everlasting? I know all the Vedas by heart and have not found the truth?" Said the Buddha: "Learning is a good thing; but it availeth not. True wisdom can be acquired by practice only. Practise the truth that thy brother is the same as thou. Walk in the noble path of righteousness and thou wilt understand that while there is death in self, there is immortality in the truth."

THE DREAM OF LIFE

Retold from the Hindu Scriptures

On the surface of the earth there once existed a fair and fruitful kingdom, golden with ripe corn and musical with birds whose bright plumage shone like jewels amidst the foliage. The king of this happy land was glorious as the sun in his power and beauty.

One day as he sat listening to the playing of lutes, there appeared before him a magician in fantastic attire who prayed permission to perform some magic. This being granted, he began to whirl before the eyes of the king a glittering wand set with peacock feathers. At that moment an emissary from another kingdom entered the royal presence, leading a horse, a gift from his master to the king. "Do you, O king, mount this horse," whispered the magician, and the king, dizzy from gazing at the whirling staff, obeyed as in a dream. Closing his eyes he sat like one spell-bound; but to him it seemed that he was borne on that steed through the air, passing over barren deserts and endless mountains till, after uncounted days he came to a mighty forest. Being well-nigh exhausted, he dismounted and slept in the hollow of a tree. In the morning the horse was gone and the king wandered in despair, almost dying of hunger. Suddenly he came face to face with a scavenger woman who was carrying some food. Knowing that his life might depend on his getting this, the king begged it of her, and she agreed to give it to him but only on the condition that he would marry her. He finally consented and went with her to her abode where for some years he lived with her in misery and filth, surrounded by her cruel and rapacious relatives whose vulgar quarrels made his life hideous. At last, in an effort to escape, he took his wife and the children that were now theirs, to a

cave exposed to chilling winds and rain and where they had only apes for company.

Years passed in ever increasing degradation. Then came famine. Men fought with each other like beasts over a stone thinking it to be bread. The waters dried up and, as a final curse, a consuming fire swept over the wretched land. Flying from the flames as from the fires of hell, the king found himself stranded with his family in a wilderness, without food or hope. Hearing his youngest child crying in hunger he resolved to seek release in death; but as he was on the point of ending his existence he heard voices. Opening his eyes, he found himself in his kingly robes, seated on his horse in the midst of his court with his courtiers about him watching him in dismay. He would have fallen but for their supporting arms. Bewildered, he questioned them and they told him that for two hours he had sat thus motionless. "Are my wits gone?" he asked. "Am I the scavenger or am I the king? What is reality and what is time?" Then his eyes fell on the smiling magician and darkened. "Trickster!" he cried, "In what snare did you entrap me by your magic?" But even as he spoke, the sorcerer vanished from sight. "How is this?" exclaimed the king. "That miserable man chained me for sixty years to a life of inexpressible woe, to cold and exposure, to squalor and greed,—I, a king! And now the one who caused this is gone from my grasp."

"Great Lord," said a wise counselor, "a common sorcerer never departs without pay. This was divine magic practised on the king in order to reveal to him the common lot of humanity. It was the Omnipotent Magician Himself Who spreads His illusion over men's minds. The mind alone, O king, creates all worlds to the utmost ends of the spheres. As thou, king, didst believe thyself to be a scavenger, so

do we believe ourselves to be so and so, through our mind. He alone who curbs the desires of his mind will enjoy inward happiness. He alone who knows himself as a spiritual being is freed from all affairs of this world, and all illusion. The thought that 'I am distinct from God' binds the mind to the world; but the belief that God is all, releases the mind from bondage. Let go thy thought of self; cease from thy selfish cares, O king; resign thyself to the divine will and thou shalt attain supreme felicity."

CYCLIC REST AND CHANGE

Hitherto Unpublished Article by Swami Vivekananda

(The following article was the last of three written by Swami Vivekananda with his own hand during his first visit in America to answer questions put by a Western disciple. This disciple kept them for his private use until recently when he passed them over for publication in the "Message".)

This whole universe is a case of lost balance. All motion is the struggle of the disturbed universe to regain its equilibrium, which, as such, cannot be motion. Thus in regard to the internal world it would be a state which is beyond thought, for thought itself is a motion. Now when all indication is towards perfect equilibrium by expansion and the whole universe is rushing towards it, we have no right to say that that state can never be attained. Again it is impossible that there should be any variety whatsoever in that state of equilibrium. It must be homogenous, for as long as there are even two atoms they will attract and repel each other and disturb the balance. Therefore, this state of equilibrium is one of unity, of rest and of homogeneity. In the language of the internal, this state of equilibrium is not thought, nor body, nor anything which we call an attribute. The only thing which we can say it will retain is what is its own nature, as existence, self-consciousness and blissfulness.

This state in the same way cannot be two. It must only be a unit, and all fictitious distinctions of I, thou, etc., all the different variations must vanish, as they belong to the state of change or *Maya*. It may be said that this state of change has come now upon the Self, showing that before this, it had to the state of rest and liberty; that at present the state of differentiation is the only real state, and the state of homogeneity is the primitive crudeness, out of which this changeful is manufactured, and it will be only degeneration to go back to the state of undifferentiation. This argument would have some weight if it could be proved that these two states, i. e., homogeneity and heterogeneity, are the only two states happening but once through all time. What happens once must happen again and again. Rest is followed by change,—the universe. But that must have been preceded by other changes, and will be succeeded by other rests. It would be ridiculous to think that there was a period of rest and then came this change which will go on forever. Every particle in nature shows that it is coming again and again to periodic rest and change.

This interval between one period of rest and another is called a *Kalpa*. But this *Kalpic* rest cannot be one of perfect homogeneity, for in that case there would be an end to any future manifestation. Now to say that the present state of change is one of great advance in comparison to the preceding state of rest is simply absurd, because in that case the coming period of rest being much more advanced in time must be much more perfect!! There is no progression or digression in nature. It is showing again and again the same forms. In fact the word law means this. But there is a progression with regard to souls. That is to say, the souls get nearer to their own natures and in

each *Kalpa* large numbers of them get deliverance from being thus whirled around. It may be said the individual soul being a part of the universe and nature, returning again and again, there cannot be any liberty for the soul, for in that case the universe has to be destroyed. The answer is that the individual soul is an assumption through *Maya* and it is no more a reality than Nature itself. In reality, this individual soul is the unconditioned Absolute *Brahman* (the Supreme).

All that is real in Nature is *Brahman* only it appears to be this variety, or Nature, through the superimposition of *Maya*. *Maya* being illusion cannot be said to be real, yet it is producing the phenomena. If it be said, how can *Maya* herself being illusion produce all this, our answer is that what is produced, being also ignorance, the producer must also be that. How can ignorance be produced by knowledge? So this *Maya* is acting in two ways as nescience and science (relative knowledge) and this science after destroying nescience or ignorance, is itself also destroyed. Thus *Maya* destroys herself and what remains is the Absolute, the Essence of existence, knowledge and bliss. Now whatever is reality in nature is this Absolute, and Nature coming to us in three forms of God, conscious and unconscious, i. e., God, personal souls and unconscious beings, the reality of all these is the Absolute. The reality of all these is the Absolute, through *Maya* seen to be difference; but the vision of God is the nearest to the reality and the highest. The idea of personal God is the highest idea which man can have. All the attributes attributed to God are true in the same sense as are the attributes of Nature. Yet we must never forget that the personal God is the very Absolute seen through *Maya*.

The present is a mighty Divinity.—*Goethe*.

SONG OF RELEASE

A Fragment from Chang Heng

(Chinese Poet, 2nd Century)

In death I rest and am at peace;
In life I toiled and strove.
Is the hardness of the winter stream
Better than the melting of spring?
All pride that the body knew,
Was it not lighter than dust?
What Ch'ao and Hsu despised,
What Po-ch' eng fled,
Shall I desire, whom death
Already has hidden in the Eternal Way—
Where Li Chu cannot see me,
Nor Tzu Yeh hear me,
Where neither Yao nor Shun can praise me
Nor the tyrants Chieh and Hsin condemn me,
Nor wolf nor tiger harm me,
Lance prick me nor sword wound me?
Of the Primal Spirit is my substance;
I am a wave in the river of darkness and light.
The Maker of all things is my Father and Mother,
Heaven is my bed and earth my cushion,
The thunder and lightning are my drum and fan,
The sun and moon my candle and my torch,
The milky way my mote, the stars my jewels.
With Nature am I conjoined;
I have no passion, no desire.
Wash me and I shall be no whiter,
Foul me and I shall yet be clean.
I come not, yet am here;
Hasten not, yet am swift.

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

Nineteen years ago Swami Paramananda, answering a spiritual call, came to this country of America. To-day, in response to this same call, his feet are turned towards the east, towards India. He is gone, for how long he cannot say definitely; but for some months at the least. The decision came quickly, so quickly that students and friends all over the country were almost bewildered on hearing it. He has left behind a sacred trust in the hands of his consecrated workers whose mission and privilege it is to carry on the work that he has built up through years of tireless, selfless effort; to preserve the spirit of love, tolerance and universality which has been so preeminently his gift to the world. The Swami's absence will be a time of consolidation, a time of testing, a time for the application of the living principles which have been the very heart of his great and simple message.

The last two weeks at the Ananda-Ashrama prior to the Swami's departure were tense with concentrated activity. Every effort was made to rush the new Community House, which has been for some months under construction, to completion in order that the Swami might dedicate it before he went away. On Christmas eve, however, the day set for the Dedication Services, there was still much to be done on the house to make it ready for occupancy. All efforts, therefore, were centered on the big Assembly Room. Thursday afternoon, December 24th, workers were busy up till three o'clock, removing all traces of carpenters' debris and decorating with garlands and greens. When the doors were finally opened, people were admitted into a spacious room, golden brown in tone, whose windows on all sides command a dreamlike view of circling mountains and rainbow tinted valleys. From the beams on the ceil-

ing red vigil lights hung from chains giving the effect of a real sanctuary. The stone mantel was transformed into a high-altar with lights, flowers and holy pictures. At the east end of the room, commanding both the Assembly Room and the dining-room which opens into it at right angles, stood the Swami's platform with its flower-decked altar, and on either side, two tiny, shimmering Christmas trees.

A sacred and beautiful atmosphere was created which the Swami filled to overflowing with a feeling too deep for words, with a message so poignant, so tender, so all-enfolding that every heart was hushed. Not a few remained for supper at the Ashrama so that they might attend the eight o'clock Service and many more came. As darkness fell, the flaming candles and the hanging ruby vigils took on new beauty. To those who drove up the avenue they shone like stars. Never did Dedication Services seem to be more truly sanctified. Not only was the new house dedicated to the service of God and man, but all present were likewise dedicated. Christmas carols were sung in full chorus and as a final benediction, following the Swami's blessing, a poem by the Swami, "O Thou Tender Compassion", with music composed by the Ashrama workers, was chanted by three voices.

There is one more day that must be recorded. The Sunday following Christmas the Swami bade all his friends farewell at two Services, one at eleven o'clock in the morning, the other at half past three in the afternoon. When the very root of the heart is touched, speech is impossible. What the Swami said that Sunday, the spirit that flowed from him palpably, will never be forgotten by those whose privilege it was to hear him. At the afternoon Service the big room was full to over-flowing, between two and

three hundred people being present. "My Message to You" was the subject of the Swami's address, and it was a message to "the heart of humanity". Many were unable to speak when the Service was ended, others were weeping, and all were moved to the very core of their being. There is a flame burning at the heart of the Ashrama,—a flame of faith and consecration, fanned by the Swami's hand to glowing heat. What he has given us through his love, his life, his sacrifice, can never die. It will grow in strength and loveliness through the blessing of the Divine. At the Christmas-eve Service a gracious lady handed the Swami a farewell gift from a group of devoted friends. In summing up all that they would say to him, she quoted from the poet Keats; and these lines with their eternal promise still ring in our hearts:

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever;
Its loveliness increases; it will never
pass into nothingness."

The Swami's work, this lady said, was a thing of beauty and could never pass into nothingness, but would increase in all blessed qualities throughout the years.

On Monday, December 28th, the Swami left Pasadena for the east. Forty friends gathered at the station and wished him "God-speed" as he stood on the rear platform, gazing down into their upturned faces till the train passed out of sight. It is hoped that the next few months will see ever greater fulfillment of the Swami's dream for the Ashrama, for his work in Boston and elsewhere. The Community House should be open for students soon after the first of the year. All Services and Classes will continue uninterruptedly and development work will go on. May 1926 be a year of beauty and fulfillment.

BOOK REVIEWS**RHYTHM OF LIFE**

"Swami Paramananda a poet-mystic of undeniable charm and sincerity, has recently published a collection of songs of exaltation and adoration of the Supreme Spirit, bearing the title, "Rhythm of Life" which fitly supplements the two preceding volumes of poetry by the same author.

"In reading these offerings of Swami Paramananda's devout muse the feeling is gained that here is a human soul which has achieved that rhythmic attitude of life so desirable. With love reigning in one's heart, the poet-preacher teaches that all ills will be conquered, all wounds healed.

"There is a selflessness in these poems of worship suggestive of the songs of the Psalmist when he was closest to Divinity and with an utter forgetfulness of self poured out his soul's longings and his soul's tributes. Rhapsody is the keynote of Swami Paramananda's muse, permeating every line.—*Sam T. Clover, "Saturday Night", Los Angeles.*

ECHOES FROM INDIA

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Message of the East



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Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tyndall.

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PRODUCTIVE SPIRITUALITY

By Swami Paramananda



HAT which produces an exalted type of man or woman is productive spirituality. It is not what we profess but what we are able to express that signifies the measure of our success. This is the standard. And it should be the standard. Whenever any one comes to us with a theory, whether in the line of science, or any practical line, we wish first to see where it can be put to some practical use, where it will give us something definite to work out. If it does not stand the test of practical application, we reject it. Unless it can be made productive, we have no use for it. Same way is it with religion and its influence upon the lives of men and upon their destiny.

To-day there is a tremendous reaction in regard to religion. The very word is noxious to some people. I have known students,—young, intelligent minds,—some of whom have had this reaction even against the word "God". Once I was actually told by one of them: "We love your teaching, the simplicity of it, the directness of it, the practical part of it, but can you not leave out the word 'God'?" This made me think. Why do they want the name of God left out? It is because men have used the Name in such a way that they have made a caricature of it. Whenever we men-

tion the name of God there should be the sense of a living Presence. Whenever we utter a sound that signifies something fine, we should have a fineness of feeling to sustain it. If we do not give expression to that, it contains nothing for us. Even the tone of the voice does not seem to give us what it ought to give.

There are standards, especially in regard to things of the Spirit, and these standards must be verified by our life and through our life. We are not parrots; and we are not meant to act like parrots. Religion does not consist in a man's utterance, in his profession of faith, or in his clinging to a creed or dogma; it is primarily living and producing. Often people ask: "Show me what religion has done for you and others." It is the productive aspect that interests them and it should be the end and aim of religion, of philosophy, of life itself. There is something, for instance, very big in the concept of universal love. Every rational person feels this. We do not admire anything that is petty; anything that is small or limited. Our ideal always is for the highest and the best. But how are we to know that a man is loving if he does not hold a loving heart? How do we know that a man is kind? Through his kindly action. How do we know that a man is wise? Through his wisdom as expressed in his daily activities, in his utterance,—in things which are practical. When these qualities are absent, it makes very little difference whether he professes one religion or another.

It may be said, "These things you are telling us are identical with the Christian faith." They are. I have no desire to bring before you something new or alien. You already know what is true in life; you already have your own standards. The question is, how many are giving expression to these standards? That is what makes all the dif-

ference in life and living. If we find there is corruption in religion, it is not the fault of religion; it is the fault of its application. Once at a great Christian convention a man rose and declared that Christianity was a tremendous failure, at which another man, who was very witty, replied: "How can Christianity be a failure when it has never been tried?" Here is something we must consider, and not in a superficial way. My meaning is not to strike a blow against any faith, whether it be Christian, Hindu, Buddhist or some other existing world belief. My meaning is that we should consider whether or not people are capable of living their ideal.

Take some of the fundamental principles of Christianity; put them side by side with those of other religions. You will find no fundamental difference; yet tremendous differences seem to exist. Where and what is the cause of these? When a man stands on the plains he sees a great contrast between the lowly grass and the mighty trees; but when he ascends to the mountain-top and looks from its high peak onto the plain below, all differences vanish. Therefore let us lift our vision. It is the lofty vision which gives the blending harmony. As we rise to a higher concept, to a higher realization, all these fictitious barriers vanish and we find that what we are all seeking is something that will make for a better humanity.

This is our great aim. In order to produce a better humanity, however, we must make ourselves better; and that means not merely talking glibly about our ideals, but living them. We are capable of living them. The same mind which we use for small thoughts, for selfish interests, for hatred, jealousy and anger, is capable of rising to loftier heights and giving us a larger vision. You may say that to-day it is impossible to live according to one's highest ideals;

that if a man should take a notion to follow the teaching of the Bible or of Buddha, that hatred is not conquered by hatred, but by love, he would be defeated. This is modern life, you may say, the interests of the people are different. They have to think first and foremost of themselves, whereas the teaching of religion is that we must think first of the Kingdom of Truth. "First seek ye the Kingdom of Truth, all other things whatsoever ye desire shall be fulfilled". Now is there anything impractical in this teaching? Here is something we must consider. Have we considered it? Have we put it to the test? If we have, then we know that it is not impractical; on the contrary, that it is the most practical teaching there is. Whenever we gain our access to something bigger in the way of inspiration, in the way of wisdom, in the way of strength, we never lack for lesser things.

It is the lofty mind that finds the fulfillment of happiness, of power, of achievement in life. If we confine ourselves to narrow limitations, going in a little circle round and round ourselves and our selfish interests, although we may want happiness above everything, it cannot come. There are certain things which belong to certain spheres of life. When we climb to a high place, whatever is within the range of that elevation comes before our eyes without our asking for it; although before we have risen there, we may have imagined all sorts of things which were not true. Same way it is with life.

Our spirituality, our vision, must be made to enter into our practical life and living. What good is there to place our faith in anything unless it gives us a working hypothesis? There is a working hypothesis for religion—a fundamental, unshakable one. It is something we must discover, and not only intellectually; we must put it to the test.

This is the duty of every man and woman. You can find this working hypothesis in your business, in all your affairs of life; and by means of it you can better them. It is absurd when people say, "I cannot do this; the standard of life is different now from what it was when Jesus lived, or Buddha, or St. Francis." It is the same humanity. We possess the same human elements; our heart and mind are the same; our problems are absolutely the same with a little variation, and the only way we can solve them is to take the same basis for working them out.

We are not practical to-day in the spiritual sense. One man says that it is the duty of the priest to look after his salvation for him. Another man thinks that if he pays the minister and keeps a pew, he has done all his duties in regard to the church. What is a church? Is it something cold and material, a house, a structure; or is it something living? If it is something living, we must be sustained by That, we must bring That into our life and action, into every word that we utter. Even our ordinary words must carry significance. It is a matter of great sadness when our life becomes separated from our higher interests, when we confess to ourselves that we are not capable of pursuing a lofty ideal; that our physical and mental capabilities will not allow us to follow something high and noble.

There is but one Saviour, and that Saviour must be awakened within us by our life and by our conduct. You may say with fanatical zeal, "Christ will save me". But how are you going to know this unless you have that Christ element in your life? Have you learned to love? Have you learned to forgive? Have you learned what the meaning is of religion, of faith in the Father in Heaven? This is what makes us exalted, and for lack of this we are sordid and miserable. In our own mind and heart we carry a

self-created load; we carry it until we feel it is breaking us to pieces and we cry out and say, "There is no help—it is my destiny". Yet within the same mind and heart we can create such a tangible, beneficent, all-powerful force that we no longer recognize any misery, any defeat, anything that is pertaining to evil. You may think that this is entirely a question of imagination, of poetic concept, that a person may imagine all these beautiful and lovely things, but those who have once come in contact with that higher realm, they find it more real than food or drink, or the clothes which they wear; and because it is real to them, they give their heart and soul, every bit of themselves, with consecrated devotion.

Now what has become real to one person can become real to another. If we turn away from religion, from God, from Truth, it only means that we do not know what they signify, and the reason we do not know is because we have not tried to make them real. Whatever we want with our heart and soul, it comes to us. There is that great saying: "As a man thinketh, so is he". We cannot expect to think of material, sordid things, to place our faith entirely in the material and the changeable and yet find our rest in the Eternal. As a man places his faith and trust and as a man exerts himself along these lines, so does he achieve. Achievement in life depends upon our vision, upon our standard. First we see the picture in our own mind. It is so in business. We conceive something that we are going to do, a point that we are going to reach; then we work for it, and according to our concept our mind gives us the light for accomplishment and our body receives stimulation. The more spiritual stimulation we have, the more is our body able to create. There are some people who seem to be exalted even by strenuous work, while others perform their

tasks with a sense of heaviness. They rise in the morning with a heart full of weight, full of misery and despondency. When they go into the field of action what can they expect to accomplish? Unless we carry strength, we cannot accomplish anything, and this strength, this inspiration, comes not from our flesh, but from within. When the body is refreshed, when the mind is exalted, then we start our day full of courage and optimism, then everything goes well.

We carry with us the secret of our success and also of our failure. But the point is not that a man should merely calculate for success and try to guard himself against failure. He must have something greater than that in view. He must have so lofty a vision that his hands and feet, his mind and brain, even his environment, fall into rhythm with it and bring him fulfillment. There is no accident, there is no chance, there is no anarchy in the cosmic universe. Nothing can possibly go wrong. We are placed here by an All-wise One, and we are continually being led. It is we who close the door: we cut ourselves off from that beneficent Source. If we keep our avenue open, we shall always feel nourished and sustained.

How can a man live without God? He thinks he can, and that is his greatest folly. He thinks he can find his happiness by scheming, by cheating, by doing things not in the light of truth; but finally he comes to a place where he is dejected, where he has no longer any hope or any faith. He feels he has sinned greatly and cannot possibly enter the Kingdom of Truth. There is nothing we can do to destroy the soul we have inherited from the Supreme. It is indestructible. For us merely to be convinced that we have an indestructible Source is not enough, however. It implies a very great responsibility. What are we going to do with our heritage? Suppose you know from the Bible

or from your minister that you are a child of God; is that sufficient? You must prove it by your life and by your actions.

There is no use in people saying that they have this faith or they have that faith, that they are great or noble if they do not manifest greatness and nobility. If at any time you feel that you are superior to another, do not look down upon him; prove your superiority by your exalted qualities. If at any time you feel that you must go out and convert another to your own feeling and faith, do it by all means, but not with force; do it by your superior love, by your greater understanding. This is what gives the picture of productive religion. Sometimes we come in contact with a man of such noble nature that it does not make any difference who he is, where he was born, or what his faith is. He carries with him his manhood, his life and his conduct. His philosophy and religion shine continuously and we know that he is what he believes in. He is a child of God and as such we cannot put any label on him, whether Christian, Hindu, Buddhist or Chinese.

What a wonderful thing it will be when we all reach this consciousness; when instead of quarrels and fictitious points of difference, instead of finding all the time something discordant, harsh and disturbing to ourselves and others, we shall come to the recognition that we are placed here, every one of us, not by accident, but by a divine hand, with a divine vocation. Whether we are working in the street or are holding a more important post in the social or political organization makes no difference; each man is great in his own place if he knows how to hold it. The man who does menial service with consecration and devotion—with a sense that he is here not for selfish fulfillment, but to carry out the will of God—glorifies his labour. This

may sound very vague. We have heard such things from our childhood. It is not words, however, that will convince us that this is the way to live. Conviction can only come through experience. If we feel that we have within us a greater will, a higher will, a more lofty and efficient mentality, let us try by all means to find wherefrom it comes. I am certain that after we have exhausted all our rational faculties, we shall surrender ourselves to that supreme Power and say, "Not my will, but Thine. In all circumstances may I be guided by that Will which sustains mine. In fact I want no will of my own".

It is a very beautiful moment in life when we can step out from our own little self, from our turbulence, our despondency, from all the disorder that goes on continuously within us, and feel that we are something greater than we have imagined ourselves to be. It is a tremendous evolution that a man with petty feelings, with selfishness, with limitations, with a failing and faltering attitude can suddenly come to realize that he is heir to an infinite Source. Nothing short of this realization can ever satisfy us. When we know our worth we are incapable of doing anything sordid, base or ignoble. Even when through ignorance a man does wrong, he has this heart-hunger always within him. He wants happiness and he thinks by evil means he is going to gain it; but there comes a day when he realizes that the only way to gain happiness is to follow the path set by a divine hand. This is our supreme duty.

We cannot all become saints or men of genius. In fact those of us who are ambitious for such things will never attain them. We can, however, give ourselves wholly,—mind, heart and body,—saying, "Here are my hands, take them and use them; I withhold nothing. My mind, my brain, all that I have, are Thine, because I know not how

to guide them. Do Thou guide them",—and this is spirituality. Such spirituality wherever it is found, whether in the east or in the west, in the north or in the south, has only one label, and that is universal religion. We cannot divide the infinite sky above us. It cannot be partitioned off—Godhead cannot be partitioned off. He is ours by right; but He can never be the exclusive possession of any man or creed. When that truth dawns in our mind, shall we shrink from any one? Can we live under the influence of that great, beneficent Light and act like those who are dwelling in ignorance? It is not possible. It is inconsistent. To quote lofty sentiments from the Bible, such as "Love thy neighbour as thyself", is worthless; we must prove them.

There is a simple little text that comes down to us from Indo-Aryan source. It says that religion does not consist in doctrines or dogma; religion consists in being and becoming. "Not those who call me Lord, Lord, Master, Master, by any chance enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but those who do the will of My Father." It is doing the will of the Father, or of Truth—whatever name we give to it—that transforms our life, and will produce a better humanity; not a better humanity after we all depart from this life, not in some visionary way, but here and now. Instead of hating we shall learn to know the value of love, the practical application of it. Instead of being selfish and grasping, we shall know what richness of heart means, and through it we shall experience a greater happiness. A small vessel cannot hold a large amount of anything. If we make ourselves small and petty, then it makes no difference what great sentiments, what high ideals, are poured into us, we cannot contain them.

Let us expand our heart, our soul and our mind instead

of constantly clinging to the petty and the material. It means working; but it is a wonderful thing to have opportunity to work and to serve, to lay down our very life if need be; because by so doing we prove our faith in eternal peace. As man's faith unfolds, his whole nature unfolds, his power becomes greater. He no longer theorizes; he demonstrates his faith through action. This is the type of humanity we may say is productive. This is productive spirituality.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Counsels of Father Giles

The man who is slothful loses this world and the next; for he bringeth not forth any fruit himself, and he is of no profit to his neighbour. It is impossible for a man to attain unto virtue without diligence and without great labour. When thou art able to abide in a safe place, abide not in a place which is doubtful; he abideth in a safe place who is diligent and afflicts himself and works and strives according to the will of God and for God, and neither for fear of punishment nor for reward, but for God. The man who refuseth to afflict himself and to spend himself for Christ verily refuseth the glory of Christ; and even as diligence is profitable and helpful to us, so carelessness is always contrary to us.

Very diligent ought man to be to obtain and keep the virtues and the grace of God, ever using that grace and virtue faithfully; because oftentimes it befalleth to that man who laboureth not faithfully that he loseth the fruit for the leaves, or the wheat for the straw. To one, God of His grace, granteth good fruit with few leaves, and to another He gives fruit and leaves together; and others there be which have neither fruit nor leaves. Meseemeth a great-

er thing to know well how to guard and keep secret the good gifts and graces of the Lord, than to know how to obtain them. . . . Man asketh of God an infinite gift, without measure and without end; and he desireth not to love God save with measure and with end. Whosoever would be loved of God, and would receive from Him merit boundless and measureless, must love God without measure and without limit, and must always render Him infinite service. Blessed is he who loveth God with all his heart and with all his mind, and always afflicteth his body and his mind for love of God, seeking therefor no recompense under heaven, save only that he may know himself His debtor.

If a man were exceeding poor and needy and another man should say unto him: "I am willing to lend thee a very precious thing for the space of three days; and know that if, during this period of three days, thou shalt make good use of this thing thou wilt gain an infinite treasure which will make thee rich for evermore", it is certain that that poor man would be very anxious to use that precious thing well and diligently, and much would he study to profit thereby. So, in like manner, I say that the thing lent us by the hand of the Lord is this body of ours, the which the good God hath lent us for three days; for all our times and years are in comparison but as three days. If then thou wouldst be rich and enjoy eternally the divine sweetness, study to use well this body of thine lent by the hand of God, and to make it bring forth fruit in this space of three days, to wit, in the brief period of thy life; for if thou art not diligent to lay up treasure in this present life, while yet thou hast time, thou wilt not be able to enjoy those eternal riches, nor to rest for evermore in that holy celestial peace.

If all the estates in the world belonged to one person and he cultivated them not, neither caused them to be cultivated by others, what fruit or what profit would he have from these things? Certain it is, he would have no profit therefrom, nor any fruit. But well might it be that a man should have but few fields and, cultivating them well, should have much profit for himself, and for others, ample fruit and abundant. A worldly proverb saith: Set not an empty pot on the fire to boil in the hope that thy neighbour will fill it; and so, in like manner, God willeth not that any grace shall remain empty. For the good God never giveth grace to a man that he may keep it empty; rather doth He give it to the end that he may fill it with fruit of good works; for good-will sufficeth not, unless a man seek to follow it out and to fill it with the fruit of holy works.

Once a wanderer said to Friar Giles: "Father, I beseech thee give me some consolation;" to whom Friar Giles made answer: "My brother, seek to stand well with God, and forthwith thou wilt have the consolation whereof thou hast need; for if a man prepare not a spotless dwelling-place within his soul for God to live and rest therein, he will never find shelter, nor rest, nor true consolation in created things."

In practical matters the end is not mere speculative knowledge of what is to be done, but rather the doing of it. It is not enough to know about virtue, then, but we must endeavour to possess it, and to use it, or to take any other steps that may make us good. The test of truth in matters of practice is to be found in the facts of life; for it is in them that the supreme authority resides.—*Aristotle*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

He indeed is blessed in whom all the qualities of head and heart are fully developed and evenly balanced. He acquits himself admirably in whatever position he may be placed. He is full of guileless faith and love for his God and yet his dealings with others leave nothing to be desired. When he is engaged in worldly affairs, he is a thorough man of business; in the assemblage of the learned, he establishes his claims as a man of superior wisdom, and in debates he shows wonderful powers of reasoning. To his parents he is obedient and affectionate, to his relations and friends he is loving and sweet; to his neighbours he is kind and sympathetic, always ready to do them good. Such a man is indeed perfect.—*Sri Ramakrishna*

The greatest contemplative of all times was Christ. But he was ever at the service of men, and never did his ineffable and perpetual contemplation diminish His charity or His exterior activity. For the glory of this gift of intelligence consists in deed joined to contemplation. This is the source of freedom.—*John Ruysbroeck*

The wise man hath satisfaction of his knowledge; he is great through his own merits. His tongue is in accord with his mind; just are his lips when he speaks, his eyes when he gazes, his ears when he hears.—*Ptah-hotep*

He who does not do what I command sees me in vain. This brings no profit. Whilst he who lives far off from where I am and yet walks righteously, is ever near me.

— *Gautama Buddha*

He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him.—*Jesus the Christ*

THEE I LOVE IN ALL

By Swami Paramananda

Thee I love in all, and all I love for Thee.
Youth and old, rich and poor,
The birds that sing, and birds that cry,
Faces that shine, and faces in gloom:
In all I love Thee, and for Thee I love
them all.

I adore Thee in flowers, I adore Thee in
trees,—and in grass that grows so
low.

I lift my head in worship to gaze upon Thee
in sapphire sky.

As I stand on the river bank and behold
Thy silver gleam on moonlit night,
My heart heaves with delight.

I sing Thy praise with the glory of dawn,
And I chant Thy supplication at the quiet
of setting sun.

I love those that dance with joy,
And I love those that are crushed by sorrow.
For Thee I love them all, and Thee I love
in all.

Above and below and on all sides hast Thou
encircled me.

It is Thy love I give Thee,
As the altar-flower gives its fragrance at
Thy feet.

Art Thou not its fragrance and its life?
Art Thou not its beauty and its soul?
Like unto that flower I lie at Thy feet
And offer Thee Thine own gift:
my love and my life.

ANCIENT INDIAN CULTURE AND THE MODERN SPIRIT

By Sri Aurobindo Ghose

(From "The Renaissance in India")

What was the ancient spirit and characteristic soul of India? European writers, struck by the general metaphysical bent of the Indian mind, by its strong religious instincts and religious idealism, by its other-worldliness, are inclined to write as if this were all the Indian spirit. An abstract, metaphysical, religious mind, overpowered by the sense of the infinite, not apt for life, dreamy, unpractical, turning away from life and action as *Maya* (illusion); this, they said, is India; and for a time Indians in this as in other matters submissively echoed their new western teachers and masters. Since then Europe has discovered that there was, too, an Indian art of remarkable power and beauty; but the rest of what India meant it has hardly at all seen.

Spirituality is indeed the master key of the Indian mind; the sense of the infinite is native to it. India saw from the beginning,—and even in her ages of reason and her age of increasing ignorance she never lost hold of the insight,—that life cannot be rightly seen in the sole light, cannot be perfectly lived in the sole power of its externalities. She was alive to the greatness of material laws and forces; she had a keen eye for the importance of the physical sciences; she knew how to organize the arts of ordinary life; but she saw that the physical does not get its full sense until it stands in right relation to the supra-physical. She saw that the complexity of the universe could not be explained in the present terms of man or seen by his superficial sight, that there were other powers behind, other powers within man himself of which he is normally unaware, that he is

conscious only of a small part of himself, that the invisible always surrounds the visible, the supra-sensible, the sensible, even as infinity always surrounds the finite. She saw, too, that man has the power of exceeding himself, of becoming himself more entirely and profoundly than he is, ---truths which have only recently begun to be seen in Europe and seem even now too great for its common intelligence. She saw the myriad gods beyond man, God beyond the gods, and beyond God his own ineffable eternity. She saw that there were ranges of life beyond our life, ranges of mind beyond our present mind and above these she saw the splendours of the Spirit. Then with that calm audacity of her intuition which knew no fear or littleness she declared that there was none of these things which man could not attain if he trained his will and knowledge. He could conquer these ranges of mind, become the Spirit, become a god, become one with God, become the ineffable *Brahman*. And with the logical practicality, the sense of science and organized method which distinguished her mentality, she set forth immediately to find out the way. Hence from long ages of this insight and practice there was ingrained in her her spirituality, her powerful psychic tendency, her great yearning to grapple with the infinite and possess it, her ineradicable religious sense, her idealism, her Yoga, the constant turn of her art and her philosophy.

But this was not and could not be her whole mentality, her entire spirit; spirituality itself does not flourish on earth in the void, even as our mountain tops do not rise like those of an enchantment of dream out of the clouds without a base. When we look at the past of India, what strikes us next is her stupendous vitality, her inexhaustible power of life and joy of life, her almost unimaginably prolific creativeness. For three thousand years at least,—

it is indeed much longer,—she has been creating abundantly, incessantly, lavishly, with an inexhaustible many-sidedness, republics, kingdoms and empires; philosophies and cosmogonies and sciences; creeds and arts and poems, and all kinds of monuments; palaces and temples and public works; communities and societies and religious orders; laws and codes and rituals; physical sciences, psychic sciences, systems of Yoga, systems of politics and administration; arts spiritual, arts worldly, trades, industries, fine crafts,—the list is endless and in each item there is almost a plethora of activity. She creates and creates and is not satisfied and is not tired; she will not have an end of it, seems hardly to need a space for rest, a time for inertia and lying fallow. She expands, too, outside her borders; her ships cross the ocean and the fine superfluity of her wealth brims over to Judea and Egypt and Rome; her colonies spread her arts and epics and creeds in the Archipelago; her traces are found in the sands of Mesopotamia; her religions conquer China and Japan and spread westward as far as Palestine and Alexandria, and the figures of the Upanishads and the sayings of the Buddhists are re-echoed on the lips of Christ. Everywhere, as on her soil, so in her works there is the teeming of a superabundant energy of life. She lavishes her riches because she must, as the Infinite fills every inch of space with the stirring of life and energy because it is the Infinite.

But this supreme spirituality, this prolific abundance of the energy and joy of life and creation do not make all that the spirit of India has been in the past. For the third power of the ancient Indian spirit was a strong intellectuality at once austere and rich, robust and minute, powerful and delicate, massive in principle and curious in detail. Its chief impulse was that of order and arrangement,

but an order founded upon a seeking for the inner law and truth of things and having in view always the possibility of conscientious practice. India has been preeminently the land of the *Dharma* and the *Shashtra*. She searched for the inner truth and law of each human or cosmic activity: its *Dharma*; that found, she laboured to cast into elaborate forms and detailed law of arrangement its application in fact and rule of life. Her first period was luminous with the discovery of the Spirit; her second completed the discovery of the *Dharma*; her third elaborated into detail the first simpler formulation of the *Shashtra*; but none was exclusive, the three elements are always present.

In this third period the curious elaboration of all life into a science and an art assumes extraordinary proportions. The mere mass of intellectual production during the period from Asoka well into the Mohammedan epoch is something truly prodigious. There is no historic parallel for such an intellectual labor and activity before the invention of printing and the facilities of modern science; yet all that mass of research and production and curiosity of detail was accomplished without these facilities and with no better record than the memory, and for an aid the perishable palm leaf. Nor was all this colossal literature confined to philosophy and theology, religion and Yoga; it embraced all life, politics and society, all the arts from painting to dancing, all the sixty-four accomplishments, everything then known that could be useful to life or interesting to the mind, even, for instance, to such practical side minutiae as the breeding and training of horses and elephants. In each subject from the largest and most momentous to the smallest and most trivial there was expended the same all-embracing, opulent, minute and thorough intellectuality. On one side there is an insatiable curiosity, the desire of life

to know itself in every detail, on the other, a spirit of organization and scrupulous order, the desire of the mind to tread through life with a harmonised knowledge and in the right rhythm and measure. Thus an ingrained and dominant spirituality, an inexhaustible vital creativeness and gust of life and, mediating between them, a powerful, penetrating and scrupulous intelligence created the harmony of the ancient Indian culture.

I have dwelt upon these facts because they are apt to be ignored by those who look only at certain sides of the Indian mind and spirit which are most prominent in the last epochs. By insisting only upon these we get an inaccurate or incomplete idea of the past of India and of the integral meaning of its civilization and the spirit that animated it. The present is only a last deposit of the past at a time of ebb; it has no doubt also to be the starting-point of the future, but in this present all that was in India's past is still dormant, it is not destroyed; it is waiting there to assume new forms. The decline was the ebb-movement of a creative spirit which can only be understood by seeing it in the full-tide of its greatness; the renaissance is the return of the tide and it is the same spirit that is likely to animate it, although the forms it takes may be quite new. Its real key-note is the tendency of spiritual realization, not cast at all into any white monotone, but many-facetted, many-coloured, as supple in its adaptability as it is intense in its highest pitches. The note of spirituality is dominant, initial, constant, always recurrent; it is the support of all the rest.

Some have told us that too much religion ruined India. Precisely because we made the whole of life religion or religion the whole of life we have failed in life and gone under. If the majority of Indians had indeed made the whole

of their lives religion in the true sense of the word, we should not be where we are now; it was because their public life became most irreligious, egoistic, self-seeking and materialistic that they fell. Perhaps there was too much of religion in one sense—the word is English, smacks too much of things external—but if we give to religion the sense of the following of the spiritual impulse in its fullness, and define spirituality as the attempt to know and live in the highest Self,—the divine, the all-embracing unity,—and to raise life in all its parts to the divinest possible values, then it is evident that there was not too much of religion, but rather too little of it. The right remedy is, not to belittle still farther the age-long ideal of India, but to return to its old amplitude and give it a still wider scope, to make in very truth all the life of the nation a religion in this high, spiritual sense. India has the key to the knowledge and the conscious application of the ideal; the fences which she created to protect the outer growth of the spiritual ideal and which afterwards became barriers to its expansion she can now break down and give her spirit a freer field and an ampler flight: she can if she will, give a new and decisive turn to the problems over which all mankind is labouring and stumbling, for the clue to their solutions is there in her ancient knowledge. Whether she will rise or not to the height of her opportunity in the renaissance which is coming upon her, is the question of her destiny.

When I am through the old oak forest gone,
Let me not wander in a barren dream;
But when I am consumed with the Fire,
Give me new Phoenix-wings to fly at my desire.

—Keats

INDIVIDUALISM

By Herbert Hoover

(From "American Individualism")

Intelligence, character, courage and the divine spark are alone the property of individuals. These do not lie in agreements, in organizations, in masses or in groups. They abide alone in the individual mind and heart. Production both of mind and hand rests upon impulses in each individual. These impulses are made of the varied forces of original instincts, motives and acquired desires. Many of these are destructive and must be restrained through moral leadership and authority of the law and be eliminated finally through education. All are modified by a vast fund of experience and a vast plant and equipment of civilization which we pass on with increments to each succeeding generation. The problem of the world is to restrain the destructive instincts while strengthening and enlarging those of altruistic character and constructive impulse—for thus we build for the future.

From the instincts of kindness, pity, fealty to family and race; the love of liberty; the mystical yearnings for spiritual things; the desire for fuller expression of the creative faculties; the impulses of service to community and nation, are moulded the ideals of our people. And the most potent force in society is its ideals. If one were to attempt to delimit the potency of instinct and ideals, it would be found that while instinct dominates in our preservation yet the great propelling force of progress is right ideals. With the growth of ideals through education, with the higher realization of freedom, of justice, of humanity, of service, the selfish impulses become less and less dominant, and if we ever reach the millennium, they will disappear in the aspirations and satisfaction of pure altruism.

We have grown to understand that all we can hope to assure to the individual through government is liberty, justice, intellectual welfare, equality of opportunity, and stimulation to service. . . . There can be no rise for the individual through the frozen strata of classes, or of castes, and no stratification can take place in a mass livened by the free stir of its particles. This guarding of our individualism against stratification insists not only in preserving in the social solution an equal opportunity for the able and ambitious to rise from the bottom; it also insists that the sons of the successful shall not by any mere right of birth or favor continue to occupy their fathers' places of power against the rise of a new generation in process of coming up from the bottom. Leadership is a quality of the individual. It is the individual alone who can function in the world of intellect and in the field of leadership. If democracy is to secure its authorities in morals, religion and statesmanship, it must stimulate leadership from its own mass. Human leadership cannot be replenished by selection like queen bees, by divine right or bureaucracies, but by the free rise of ability, character and intelligence.

Our social and economic system cannot march toward better days unless it is inspired by things of the spirit. It is here that the higher purposes of individualism must find their sustenance. Men do not live by bread alone. Nor is individualism merely a stimulus to production and the road to liberty; it alone admits the universal divine inspiration of every human soul. . . . Spirituality with its faith, its hope, its charity, can be increased by each individual's own effort. And in proportion as each individual increases his own store of spirituality, in that proportion increases the idealism of democracy. For centuries, the human race

believed that divine inspiration rested in a few. The result was blind faith in religious hierarchies, the Divine Right of Kings. The world has been disillusioned of this belief that divinity rests in any special group or class whether it be through a creed, a tyranny of kings or of proletariat. Our individualism insists upon the divine in each human being. It rests upon the firm faith that the divine spark can be awakened in every heart.

While there are forces in the growth of our individualism which must be curbed with vigilance, yet there are no less glorious spiritual forces growing within, that promise for the future. There is developing in our people a new valuation of individuals and of groups and of nations. It is a rising vision of service. Indeed if I were to select the social force that above all others has advanced sharply during these past years of suffering, it is that of service—service to those with whom we come in contact, service to the nation, and service to the world itself. If we examine the great mystical forces of the past seven years we find this great spiritual force poured out by our people as never before in the history of the world—the ideal of service. When we rehearse our own individual memories of success, we find that none gives us such comfort as memory of service given. When we traverse the glorious deeds of our fathers, we to-day never enumerate those acts that were not rooted in the soil of service. Those whom we revere are those who triumphed in service, for from them comes the uplift of the human heart and the uplift of the human mind.

Humanity has a long road to perfection, but we of America can make sure progress if we will preserve our individualism, if we will preserve and stimulate the initiative of our people, if we will build up our insistence and safeguards to equality of opportunity, if we will glorify ser-

vice as a part of our national character. Progress will march if we hold an abiding faith in the intelligence, the initiative, the character, the courage, and the divine touch in the individual.

A TRIBUTE TO FA-HSIEN

By an Anonymous Writer of the Chin Dynasty

(Fifth Century)

(*Note:* Fa-Hsien was a Chinese Buddhist monk who undertook a pilgrimage to India in order to secure for China books of the Buddhist Canon, and Buddhist images. He went practically all the way on foot, walking from Central China across the desert of Gobi, over the Hindu Kush and through India down to the mouth of the Hoogly where he embarked for China, reaching there safely after an absence of thirteen years. Beside his perilous voyagings the journeys of St. Paul sink into insignificance. In his own words, taken from the record of his travels, written always with due modesty in the third person: "The countries he passed through amounted to rather fewer than thirty. From the Sandy Desert westwards all the way to India, the dignified deportment of the priesthood and the good influence of the Faith was beyond all expression in detail. As, however, the ecclesiastics at home had no means of hearing about these things, Fa-Hsien had given no thought to his own unimportant life, but came home across the sea, encountering still more difficulties and dangers. Happily he was accorded protection by the divine majesty of the Precious Trinity, and was thus preserved in the hour of danger. Therefore he wrote down on bamboo tablets and silk an account of what he had been through, desiring that the gentle reader should share this information." On his arrival in China he was given shelter by a stranger who wrote the

following tribute to this fearless and faith-inspired pilgrim.)

* * * *

It was in the cyclical year chia-yin (A. D. 414), the 12th of the period I-hsi when the year-star (Jupiter) was in Virgo-Libra, at the close of the summer retreat, that I went out to meet the Buddhist Fa-Hsien and when he arrived I kept him with me in my winter apartment. At the opportunities we had for meeting and discussion, I questioned him again and again on his travels, and to all my queries he replied affably and without hesitation and in accordance with truth. I therefore urged him to write out in detail that which so far he had merely sketched, and he retold the whole story from beginning to end. He said:

“Looking back upon what I went through, my heart throbs involuntarily and sweat pours down. That in the dangers which I encountered whether riding or on foot, I did not spare my body, was because I kept my object steadily in view and concentrated upon it a simple honesty of purpose. And so I could risk my life in places where there was no certainty of escape, in order to accomplish even a minute fraction of what I had hoped for.”

I was much affected by his words, and, sighing, said to myself, “This kind of man has been rare in all ages. From the time that the Great Religion began to flow eastwards, there has been no one forgetful of his life in the cause of the Faith to be compared with Fa-Hsien”. Thus I came to know that there are no obstacles, however numerous, which the power of sincerity will not break through, and no meritorious services which the stimulus of determination will not achieve. And the man who brings his labours to a successful issue—is he not the one who neglects the things which are generally prized and prizes the things which are generally forgotten?

VEDANTA CENTRE OF BOSTON

January was a month of farewell as from coast to coast Swami Paramananda's friends wished him "God-speed". On the evening of January seventh, just two days before he sailed for India, the members of the Boston work held a farewell reception in his honor at the new Marlboro Street Centre. It was a goodly gathering of friends old and new. Many were there who had loved and cherished the work ever since its humble beginnings,—faithful, tried hearts, forever dear to the Swami because of their devotion. Naturally there was a deep and poignant feeling as he gave to them his parting message; but it was an exalted feeling, vibrant with love, courage and consecration. All were profoundly glad that a wider world than America was to know the blessing of the Swami's word and presence, and that he was free to carry that blessing. The Swami spoke from the fullness of his heart. "I have only one desire", he said, "and that is to unify, to bring nearer, that which is true and human in all hearts, joining them with the bond of love. We want people who feel—no wrangling for effect, but feeling. There is the point of contact. Whether I am here or not, keep your hearts open and move on with the current of things if you want to play your parts in the up-building of humanity, in the great brotherhood of mankind. Be charged with the ideas that are vibrant with love and nobility, so that people may be inspired by looking at you. When you are so imbued with the spirit of love, fellowship and service that you are not conscious of doing anything, you are more blessed. When your ears are not spoiled by listening to the praise of men, then you leave them open for the voice of God to fill them. That is the acme of spiritual work. That is my dream. That is the message we have given one way or another through

philosophy, religion, prayer, poetry, spoken or written. When we allow our hearts to pulsate in rhythm, we have this great gift of outpouring. Let us all work toward that end. When you have moments of doubt, self-pity, depression, discouragement and total darkness, do not let that overwhelm you; the light is yet to come; the clouds will disperse." As a "parting, loving benediction", the Swami read his poem, "Thee I love in All", with the hope that it would give something that his friends might carry, "as a very great thread of love, a thing that nothing can untie, that is the tie of Spirit, unbroken and unbreakable."

Several gifted members made the evening lovely with music. Mrs. Mahoney (Bangs Burgess) recited a poetic tribute to the Swami in which she hailed him as a "Spirit strong from light within". Finally with tender sentiment, in the name of many, Mrs. Milliken presented the Swami with a silken love-knot binding in a golden package, as she expressed it, their humble offerings with love and God-speed. With such expressions of devotion ringing in his heart, the Swami left Boston knowing that the altar-fires will be kept burning in his absence.

ST. LOUIS AND CINCINNATI

The Swami was able only to touch at St. Louis and Cincinnati on his way east but it was a real touch of the heart. At St. Louis he spoke three times in one day, while at Cincinnati devoted students gathered round him to assure him of their loyalty and love.

RECEPTION IN NEW YORK CITY

On the eve of his sailing, the Swami was again guest of honor at a reception, this time in New York City at the studio of Miss Villa Faulkener Page. As there was a very short notice the gathering was necessarily small; but, as one member wrote us: "for the very same reason there was a quality of intimacy, sympathy and understanding". The Swami, in speaking to his friends, laid emphasis on the fact that he had never felt as an alien in a strange land, and for that reason the gates of the people's hearts were opened to him. Swami Rhagavananda of the New York Vedanta Society paid him tribute, as did other friends. Dr. Elliot White of Grace Church, New York, earnestly urged every one to live up to the Swami's teachings instead of waiting for his return from India to do so. The Swami closed the evening with a reading of a few of his poems. A member writes: "Never were four hours spent so happily and gloriously as then."

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



MARCH, 1926

HEART OF MANKIND

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tyndall.

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HEART OF MANKIND

By Swami Paramananda

(Farewell Address given by the Swami at Ananda-
Ashrama on his departure for India, December, 1925)



TO-DAY as I am about to depart for a time from this country after my long, long sojourn here, I would like to give you a message that you may keep as a gift from me,—a farewell gift, although I do not like to use this word farewell.

If you were asked in what way this teaching differs from other teachings and why it is different, how would you sum it up? It is not different and our point of emphasis has not been to show differences. The world has never been enriched because it has evolved dogmas and creeds, philosophies and religions, different and divergent; but it has been enriched by the thought of blending harmony which runs through them all, and it is upon this under-current of harmony that our emphasis has always been laid. There is no east nor west, no north nor south, and it is our greatest misfortune when we create fictitious lines of difference. As I turn over page after page of my book of life, filled for the last nineteen years with the most intense activity, I find but one thought in all that I have done, but one thing that comes before me with vivid, glowing reality, and that is,—the heart of mankind. If I could put my finger on any one thing as being fundamental,

as being the essence of what I have tried to convey to you through all these years of preaching, I think that would be the gist of it.

When a man of the East feels that he has no point of contact with the Occident, that he is not in any way related to it, he opens an avenue for his degradation. There is no word strong enough. A man degrades himself when he thinks that because he was born in a far country, in a remote place, he has no share in the life of humanity as a whole. Who but a mad person, intoxicated with ambition and greed, can say, "So long as I am happy it does not concern me what happens to other people, other nations, other lives." As a matter of fact, it is not possible for any one to degrade himself to such an extent that he can have exclusive happiness, disregarding the happiness of others. This was forcibly brought before my mind's eye at the outset of this last war, the Great War, that we are absolutely inter-related. "Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called the children of God." We are all children of God, but we do not all learn to manifest in our practical life those God-like qualities which would show to men that we are here primarily to express spiritual attributes. Where in politics, in creeds, even among people of the same nation, do we find such fundamental unity as we find among those who come together in understanding, in this blending harmony of spiritual Principle? The reason is that spiritual Principle is the basic principle of life, and life pulsates through it. We never go very far in the line of advancement when we ignore it. The men who are over-weighted with material consciousness forget this fact.

There is no use our having religion, even with all its moral and ethical systems, and all the literature that the world has ever produced, unless we can give it at least a par-

tial expression in our lives. It is not found in theory, rather is it in our practical life that we find it. This has been the dominant thought in every word that I have spoken from the public platform, in intimate talks, and in all my written books. We are not great merely because we can talk glibly or theorize, or impose something on other minds. Our greatness depends upon what we are fundamentally. Man in his home, man in his waking and sleeping hours, man when he is taken altogether unaware, if under these conditions we can see him stand up and really show that he has an ideal, and that he has given himself to it utterly, it will not matter what that ideal is. You cannot measure it, I cannot measure it. No one wants to measure it, save as we find its revelation in the lives of men.

How do we know that God exists? How do we know that He is all-loving and beneficent? We know it because we see these attributes exhibited in men's lives, in characters which have blended with that eternal Principle, surmounting all distance and all difficulties through the divine Spirit. That to me is the sum and substance of religion. If this work has any value, or any significance, it lies in that, and not in the fact of a new cult, distinctly different from anything else. Peculiar phases of religious development, mysteries and complicated matters, these do not interest me in the least, but there is a way of reaching the heart of mankind, and we must find it. First, however, we must reach our own depths. That which we believe to be true, that which we have been nurtured with, we must bring into our daily living. If I could give in one word what my message is, it would be wisdom—practical wisdom. Herein lies the whole secret of life.

We may preach to others and try to convert them, try to make them believe as we do; but do you suppose we can

ever really convince any one until we have awakened in our own soul such ardour for the spiritual Principle that we can convey it without a word? Unless we have this ardour, instead of converting people we may repulse them and turn them away. That is a lesson the Occident can well learn from the soul of the East. It is an attribute of Oriental life. In India, for instance, men believe in it so tremendously that if a man is willing to endure anything for his Ideal, to die for it without a whimper, they will take from him what he has to give, without a word being spoken; they will receive it in silent contemplation.

This is not a cheap philosophy. God is never a popular subject, and those who have tried to preach Him have never been widely accepted. You may question this, you may say: "Are we not all God-fearing Christians?" Ask that again and define it within your own soul. If Christ came, not as we have pictured Him, but in His natural garb with His simple spiritual message, how many of us would accept Him? I fear there would be more who would bring about His silent crucifixion than would recognize Him. That is the world. And yet the world is ever hungering and thirsting for the message that Christ brings. The world has need of that healing balm, but in its mad intoxication it forgets and tries to destroy the very thing that would save it and bring it blessing.

Often I have heard it said, even by well-known leaders of men, "There is no use trying to help mankind. Men are not interested in humanity, or anything that is going to bring harmony upon earth; they are interested only in themselves." It may be true, but should we be discouraged because this is the state of the world? When we have a very high fever we are delirious, we do not know what is good for us. In fact we have distorted notions. We turn

away from those things which would save us, destroy our illusion and give us healing. Yet that is the very moment when we need them. We need something fundamental and enduring. Many come with teachings that have a popular appeal, but only for a time. They do not last. They are like a hay-fire, as one great teacher, a very great mystic and seer, defined them in his vivid, simple way. You touch a match to a stack of hay. It blazes tremendously for a few minutes, and then it is gone. Same way is it in human life. The things which blaze are not the abiding things. What we need is something which is enduring, which will stay with us and sustain us, and that is the spirit of religion, the import of spiritual philosophy.

If I have given any message with special insistence, it is that people may know their own worth, may know their own religion. Once when I was travelling, a gentleman asked me if I were a missionary. I told him I did not believe in conversion. "What is your work then?" he enquired surprised, and I replied, "My work is to infuse the Spirit which changes and transforms the lives of men." Whenever we have occasion to touch a life, some struggling and despondent soul, and can awaken and quicken in that soul a ray of hope, we have done our part. Whether that soul is true to us, or turns to something else, should not be our concern. The great Laotze once said something very wise. He said: When you have done good work and another has benefitted by it, why do you look for the third thing as the fools do? That is one of the greatest lessons I have learned through life, and to-day as I am about to depart I want to share it with you.

People often have said to me, "Why do you not do more public work?" The dew-drop that falls upon the flower-bud, so gentle, so unostentatious, is symbolic of spiritual work.

It does not make any noise but it opens and brings forth a blossom. Is it not sufficing for the dew-drop to know that it had a part to play in the blossoming of a flower? It may sound abstract to you, yet it contains the secret of life. If we could all learn to do our little part, knowing that we are placed here, are led and are guided by a divine Hand, a Hand that is nowhere absent, what a beneficent force it would bring into the world! Our attitude of criticism and condemnation would disappear altogether from our minds; no longer would we seek to destroy others merely because they did not agree with us, for we should see that same divine Hand in their lives as in our own. There is a wonderful ancient prayer which expresses this universal tolerant spirit: "Let all things that breathe—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path." There have been many beautiful prayers in the classics of the world, but none that gives in so comprehensive a way what I want to convey to others through my words. Let each one follow his own path. Why should he not? This message is needed to-day. In spite of all our advancement, if we can call it advancement, in spite of all our science and our material progress, we need this balancing.

Man must not forget God. Also he must not be content merely to worship the God of tradition. He should have a bigger concept of Divinity. When he says, "Thou art infinite and all-loving, O God", and then the next minute goes out and fights his brother, it is incongruous. How can he expect his prayers to be fulfilled? It is not that a person should change his belief, but that he should bring into active operation the things he believes in, the things he knows to be true. What else can one do, and still be

worthy to be called a child of God? A man may not speak or preach, may not profess any faith, and yet be the embodiment of all faith. This is my message to you—my message to every one.

You have heard us call this a non-sectarian place of worship. It is easy for one to claim anything. A man may call himself non-sectarian or universal, but what does it imply? That he is not in any way, with his thought, his word or his action, interfering with his brother man. We strive here to realize this ideal, and I pray that this work may grow in spiritual magnitude, may unfold, so as to touch other lives and inspire them with breadth of vision, with spirit of tolerance. It may not seem a great work in the sight of the world, but I feel that it has a great mission, because it is inclusive. It does not strike any one, it does not hinder any one. On the contrary, it seeks to give inspiration to all, to bind the hearts of men together, and anything that will do that, anything that will unite men's hearts, whether it comes from east or west, north or south, we should welcome with all our being. For we are terribly scattered in the world to-day. No wonder people are unhappy and that we have so many complications in our life.

I am powerless to express all that I should like to express; but this I must say to you, and it is the greatest tribute I can pay you: I have lived with you here in a country which ordinarily I might consider as alien; yet I have never had that consciousness, that word is not in my vocabulary. I have moved freely both here and in Europe, and it has been my special privilege to feel in return a kinship, a friendship which is more than friendship, which is a soul relationship. That this instinct may be awakened in mankind is my greatest hope and prayer. To that end this

place has been established; and it is maintained especially so that those who have thought profoundly along spiritual lines, no matter what their land or creed, may live under its beneficent shadow, and thus create an atmosphere, a living atmosphere, which will convey to the world what it stands for. That to me is life, philosophy and religion.

When a man comes and talks to you of lofty things, you look him over to see whether what he says coincides with what he is. If it does, your admiration is awakened, your faith quickened, and you are willing to listen. Same way it is with life in its deepest sense. Also is it true of helpfulness. We may profess a great deal of sympathy, charity and love for others, but it is what we are in our heart that conveys to another heart. We all carry livingness of life, and in order to find our access into life itself, into the living world, we must be alive, vibrant with spiritual force. Do not take this as a vague and far-distant thing. It is not far-distant for any one, not even for the business man. How are we going to play our part in life and do our duty unless we know how to be guided? It is not the aggressor, not the scheming, planning man who achieves his utmost; it is the man who has a sense of consecration. Herein we find the key to life, the key to inspiration. We may build houses, cities, civilizations, but it does not take much to destroy them again unless there is builded within us a consciousness which will preserve them.

Money, clothes, food, gratification of all our desires, these are not sufficing for human needs. We must have larger interests in life. Greater comprehension will bring us greater happiness. If all that the modern world has achieved in science and industry and along other lines of advancement could be brought into blending harmony with the spiritual Principle, this would be a nobler, a far more

peaceful world. There is no use our saying that we will not fight or quarrel, so long as our thoughts are producing things which will cause explosions. If a man continues to think bitter thoughts, if he maintains a hateful attitude, he will inspire another heart with hatred, and there will be a quarrel. When a man, however, grasps the higher order of life, when he removes such thoughts from his consciousness and learns that greatest of all laws,—the law of love,—the practical principle—he not only brings healing to his own soul, but he gives healing to the world.

It is not enough to profess a faith, we have to live it. Where? Not merely in church one day a week. That does not suffice. No one can go and worship in his church and have that worship accepted by an all-knowing, all-seeing Deity, unless he has already prepared for it throughout his day. Work and worship are not two different things. We cannot play hypocrite in the realm of reality. A man who has noble instinct expresses it through his work, through his hands, his heart, through every part of him, because it permeates his whole being, it ever accompanies him. By looking at his face we receive inspiration. Not because that face is designed differently from other faces, but because it exhibits the glow of God. It has become an avenue of expression for divine qualities. Why does a man become sordid and ugly? It is not that God Almighty has put that stamp upon him, he has put it on himself. God has not made him unattractive; he makes himself so by his thoughts of distrust, doubt, apprehension and fear. These things are constantly marking him, but let him transform his mental constitution, and he will grow beautiful, he will become a beneficent force. Is it hard work? No harder than work that we do to earn our bread and butter, than our toil in the soil for selfish gratification,—no harder than that.

What we need is understanding. Sometimes through our delusion we cut ourselves off from our Source. We can, however, learn to merge ourselves with the Infinite and what a tremendous factor that knowledge becomes in our life! Let us not blame any one else for our misfortunes or the misfortunes of others. We have, each one of us, our part to play in human destiny, and if we are fulfilling our part, if we are doing our share, that much of the world will be made better because of our existence, because of our love. If instead of holding the sordid idea that the world is all wrong and that we cannot and should not trust our fellows because they are full of evil, if instead of that we began to believe men to be better than they seem, and to trust them because fundamentally they are children of God, would it not transform life for us and for them? Imagine a number of people feeling this way, acting from this hypothesis, looking for the divine Principle in themselves and in others.

We cannot perhaps do as much as Christ or St. Francis in the way of sacrifice, but still we have that instinct within us, and we must unfold it from within, otherwise our lip praise means nothing. God is not a lover of flattery. We make a caricature of our life when we say one thing and do another. Let us banish from our hearts all unworthy thoughts, all bitterness, envy, jealousy, and strive to make this world as it befits God's children to do. That is my message to you: not a new cult, not a new creed, but a prayer that through your life, through your living, through your inspiration, through even your momentary actions, you may share in upbuilding this great world. As we learn the art of upbuilding, our hands will blend with the Almighty Hand, and our will, no matter how insignificant it may seem, how frail and faltering, will become part of that great

Will. Only then shall we know peace. Because we cannot have completeness of happiness, or peace until we have learned to blend ourselves in harmony, in unity, with the heart of the universe, with the heart of God.

Let us all rise with prayer in our soul, with love in our whole being, that through our love and prayers, through our intensity of feeling, we may feel the Presence of that great Reality and we may learn to convey it to others. Oh, let us give our heart and soul and body and mind to that One from Whom we have received the blessing of life. Let us withhold nothing, so that we may be sanctified, that we may be purified and inspired to do His Will.

ASHRAMA NIGHT

By Mildred Phillips

(Written at Ananda-Ashrama, California)

Now all is silence and the stars draw near;
Mount Elsa lifts her head, serene, benign;
All down the valley myriad stars appear,
And climbing upward in one golden line
The city lights of Pasadena shine.

The vigil light that burns with steadfast ray
Is Hope for all who see its shining bright;
Is Faith for all who kneel by it and pray;
Is Courage too for all who bravely fight;
But more,—'tis Love, resplendent through the night.

O happy place! with royal mountains nigh
Above my head protectingly to loom,
With stars to show my path, from low-hung sky,
With fragrant blessing of acacia bloom,
With vigil light to guide me through the gloom!

FLOWER OF THE FIELD

A letter from Saint Therese of Lisieux to her sister Celine.

April 25, 1893.

My little Celine,—I must come and disclose the desires of Jesus with regard to your soul. Remember that He did not say: "I am the Flower of the gardens, a carefully tended rose"; but, "I am the Flower of the fields and the lily of the valleys." Well, you must be always as the drop of dew hidden in the heart of this beautiful Lily of the valley.

The dew-drop—what could be simpler, what more pure? It is not the child of the clouds; it is born beneath the starry sky, and survives but a night. When the sun darts forth its ardent rays, the delicate pearls adorning each blade of grass quickly pass into the lightest of vapour . . . There is the portrait of my little Celine! She is a drop of dew, an offspring of heaven—her true Home. Through the night of this life she must hide herself in the field-flower's golden cup; no eye must discover her abode.

Happy dew-drop, known to God alone, think not of the rushing torrents of this world! Envy not even the crystal stream which winds among the meadows. The ripple of its waters is sweet indeed, but it can be heard by creatures. Besides, the Field-flower could never contain it in its cup. One must be so little to draw near to Jesus, and few are the souls that aspire to be little and unknown. "Are not the river and the brook," they urge, "of more use than a dew-drop? Of what avail is it? Its only purpose is to refresh for one moment some poor little field-flower."

Ah! they little know the true Flower of the field. Did they know Him they would understand better our Lord's reproach to Martha. Our Beloved needs neither our brilliant deeds nor our beautiful thoughts. Were He in search

of lofty ideas, has He not His angels whose knowledge infinitely surpasses that of the greatest genius of earth? Neither intellect nor other talents has He come to seek among us. . . . He has become the Flower of the field to show how much he loves simplicity.

The Lily of the valley asks but a single dew-drop which for one night shall rest in its cup, hidden from all human eyes. But when the shadows shall begin to fade, when the Flower of the field shall have become the Sun of Justice, then the dew-drop—the humble sharer of His exile—will rise up to Him as love's vapour. He will shed on her a ray of His light, and before the whole court of Heaven she will shine eternally like a precious pearl, a dazzling mirror of the Divine Sun.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

That God, the Maker of all things, the great Self, always dwelling in the heart of man, is perceived by the heart, the soul, the mind;—they who know It become immortal.

—*Svetasvatara Upanishad.*

To the one Mind that arranges the whole universe, and one Providence set over all, and to the helping Powers that are ordained to all, different honours and names are given by different people.—*Plutarch*

Wherever snow falls or water flows or birds fly, wherever day and night meet in twilight, wherever the blue heaven is hung by clouds or sown with stars, wherever are forms with transparent boundaries, wherever are outlets into celestial space, wherever is danger, and awe, and love,—there is Beauty, plenteous as rain, shed for thee, and though thou shouldst walk the world over, thou shalt not be able to find a condition inopportune or ignoble.

—*Emerson*

Without, the world is tired and old,
 But once within the Enchanted Door,
 The mists of time are backward rolled,
 And creeds and ages are no more;
 But all the human-hearted meet
 In one communion vast and sweet. —*Dolben*

The individual's life is in the life of the whole; the individual's happiness is in the happiness of the whole; apart from the whole, the individual's existence is inconceivable; —this is an eternal truth, and is the bed-rock on which the universe is built.—*Swami Vivekananda*

And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord, your God.—*Leviticus*

The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man to be greatly good must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination.—*Shelley*

After all there is but one race—humanity.

—*George Moore*

My spirit has pass'd in compassion and determination
 around the whole earth,

I have look'd for equals and lovers and found them ready
 for me in all lands.

I think some divine rapport has equalised me with them.

—*Walt Whitman*

THE BEGINNING OF NEWNESS

By Katharine Berry Judson

(A Zuni Indian legend of the Creation from "Myths and Legends of California and the Old Southwest".)

Before the beginning of the New-making, the All-father Father alone had being. Through ages there was nothing else except black darkness.

In the beginning of the New-making, the All-father Father thought outward in space, and mists were created and uplifted. Thus through his knowledge he made himself the Sun who was thus created and is the great Father. The dark spaces brightened with light. The cloud mists thickened and became water. From his flesh, the Sun-father created the Seed-stuff of worlds, and he himself rested upon the waters. And these two, the Four-fold, containing Earth-mother and the All-covering Sky-father, the surpassing beings with power of changing their forms even as smoke changes in the wind, were the Father and Mother of the soul-beings. Then as man and woman spoke these two together.

"Behold!" said Earth-mother, as a great terraced bowl appeared at hand, and within it water, "This shall be the home of my tiny children. On the rim of each world-country in which they wander, terraced mountains shall stand, making in one region many mountains by which one country shall be known from another." Then she spat on the water and struck it and stirred it with her fingers. Foam gathered about the terraced rim, mounting higher and higher. Then with her warm breath she blew across the terraces. White flecks of foam broke away and floated over the water. But the cold breath of Sky-father shattered the foam and it fell downward in fine mist and spray. Then Earth-mother spoke:

"Even so shall white clouds float up from the great waters at the borders of the world, and clustering about the mountain terraces shall be broken and hardened by thy cold. Then will they shed downward in rain-spray, the water of life, even into the hollow places of my lap. For in my lap shall nestle our children, mankind and creature-kind, for warmth in thy coldness."

So even now the trees on high mountains near the clouds and Sky-father, crouch low toward Earth-mother for warmth and protection. Warm is Earth-mother, cold our Sky-father.

Then Sky-father said: "Even so. Yet I, too, will be helpful to our children." Then he spread his hand out with the palm downward and into all the wrinkles of his hand he set the semblance of tiny yellow corn-grains; in the dark of the early world-dawn they gleamed like sparks of fire. "See," he said, pointing to the seven grains between his thumb and four fingers, "our children shall be guided by these when the Sun-father is not near and Thy terraces are as darkness itself. Then shall our children be guided by lights." So Sky-father created the stars. Then he said, "And even as these grains gleam up from the water, so shall seed grains like them spring up from the earth when touched by water, to nourish our children." And thus they created the seed-corn. And in many other ways they devised for their children, the soul-beings.

The object and aim of all divine commands is to love God truly, and to cleave to Him. This cannot be completely attained without a knowledge of the works of the Lord. No one can arrive at a knowledge of the Lord without knowing his own soul, his own mind, and body; for what wisdom can he possess who does not know himself?

—*Ibn Ezra*

SERVE AND BE HUMBLE

From Conversations of Swami Turiyananda

The Lord's grace doesn't manifest itself unless one resigns oneself to Him up to the last. It is no easy thing to surrender oneself to the Lord, and that whole-heartedly. They say that a devotee always beholds the Lord. It is quite true. In the Bible it is written: "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath". All this is very true. It is a law of nature. But there is another side to the question. The Lord is the Protector of the humble—their Friend and Helper. It is, however, very difficult to be humble. Humility does not come so long as there is any egotism left. Sri Ramakrishna used to recite the story of the sweeper woman. Her work was, as you know, the lowest that could be imagined, but no sooner did she possess an ornament than her vanity knew no bounds. There is an ocean of difference between the lowness of position due to worldly circumstances and the humility of a devotee—that meekness of spirit which leads him to consider himself lower than even a blade of grass.

Serve! Serve! Serve! That is the greatest teaching. Be humble! Be the servant of all! Only he who knows how to serve is fit to rule. A selfish man cannot lead. One who is ready to sacrifice himself can alone be the leader. Only as we give, do we receive. If we love others, others will love us. What will mere words do if there is no character behind them. Control your passions, anger, jealousy, pride, and never speak ill of others behind their backs. Let everything be open and free. When anything has to be done always be the first to do it, others will follow. Control the mind, be not controlled by it. Surrender yourself to

Him alone, your everything,—your body, mind and soul. We can be perfectly at peace if we resign ourselves to the Lord. Let Him do what He thinks best. It is foolishness to dictate terms to Him as regards His dealings with us. Once you have surrendered yourself at His feet there should be no room left for the assertion of your individual will. He knows what is best for you. Even if you pray for what is not desirable, He will do the right thing for you. Thou art guiding me by the hand, O Lord!—this is not a mere poetic concept. A true devotee cannot have a permanent fall. Even if he falls he is bound to rise again through the grace of the Lord.

POET-PREACHERS OF PERSIA

By Sister Daya

I

AL GHAZALI

We of the West have long admired the love poems of Hafiz and Sadi, the daring quatrains of Omar, the tender profundity of Jalalud-Din-Rumi without really knowing the motive power behind them, without, indeed, grasping the vital truth of the poems themselves. Mysticism, that intense yearning of the soul for inner contact with Truth, that hunger of the heart for direct experience of Reality, must ever go hand in hand with religion. Wherever in the world organized religion has been found, there also has sprung up with dynamic insistence its mystic expression. Sometimes this has come like a consuming flame to a few hearts, again it has inspired individual groups to a new life of inner realization within or without the main body of belief. Extolled in theory by the preachers of the letter, it has often been opposed by them in practice, when it appears as living Spirit. By its very nature free from all

fear and from all bondage, it has always been dreaded and condemned by those whose power rests upon fear and bondage. Naturally when the external form of a religion is fanatic and intolerant, repressive measures have been correspondingly severe. In such an environment saints must speak by the book if they value their safety.

Amazing is it, therefore, that from the rigid trunk of Mohammedanism, a religion which has permitted no deviation from its prescribed teachings, there sprang with unobstructed glory the *Rosa Mystica* in its purest and loveliest form. This spiritual outgrowth known as Sufism soon became for all men the religion of poetry. For the Sufis, like the troubadours of mediaeval Europe, concealed within an impassioned poetic utterance the open secrets of the soul, and under the guise of song gave forth a record of profound inner experience, which if openly stated might have drawn down upon them the wrath of the orthodox world. This lyrical expression, fresh and spontaneous, thus not only served as a shield and guard; but it flowered forth later into some of the most beautiful religious poems the world has ever known.

If we would understand the strange fascination which the Sufi movement exerted over the noblest minds of Persia, we must know that Mohammedanism was not native to Persia; it was grafted upon her by her Arabian conquerors and never, perhaps, took very deep hold upon her being. There were other powerful counteracting forces: her own Zoroastrian faith, overlaid but not wholly forgotten; the mighty influence of mystic India, flowing constantly across her borders, often as a return wave from her conquests of India, and last but not least, her own temperament with its burning sense of beauty, its instinct for Vision. Because of all this, when the Arabs withdrew after three hundred

years of domination, the higher class Persians shook themselves free of their conquerors mentally as well as physically. The codes of the Koran were still strictly enforced to satisfy the demands of the masses, but a new-born spirit of freedom made itself felt in social, literary and religious life, urging men to fuller expression. This marked the beginning of a golden age of poetry when mystics spoke in their native tongue. What is the native tongue of the mystic? Poetry. What is the perfect language for poetry? The Persian. This blending of mystical thought, lyrical utterance and musical speech, resulted in a pure beauty of expression that will forever defy translation. The Sufis became the Poet-preachers of the world.

As to the outer origin of Sufism and the meaning of the word itself, there are differing opinions. There is little doubt that the movement had its rise at a very early date, being connected with certain Arabian contemplatives who withdrew from active life from time to time, in order to develop through silence and solitude the desired state of ecstasy. The word, Sufi, meaning wool, was used to designate the woollen garment which they wore and by which they became generally known. Other derivations connect the word with root words meaning wise or pious. As early as the eighth century A. D., Rabia, a woman Sufi, stood at night upon her housetop and reaching out her hands to heaven in a rapture of devotion, sang impassioned songs to the one divine Lover. "O God!" she sang, "hushed is the day's noise; with his beloved is the lover. But Thee I have for my Lover and alone with Thee I joy."

It must not be thought that orthodox Mohammedans looked complacently at this strange and even frenzied development in their midst. Had it come in ordinary form they would have known how to act according to the rules

laid down by the Prophet. But here was something bewildering which might or might not be heresy. There was confusion in Islam. In the meantime the Sufis had their saints and their martyrs, though the word of anathema was yet withheld. It might well have been spoken had it not been for the famous Arabian philosopher Al Ghazali who placed upon Sufism his stamp of approval about the year 1100 A. D. Not only was this man regarded as a great teacher, he was looked upon as the chief teacher of the Faith after Mohammed. Therefore his decision was final and the Sufis were left free to express their philosophy in peace so long as they kept to Mohammedan metaphor and to poetic form.

His real name was Abu Hamid Mohammed. "Al Ghazali" was merely a title of honour given him according to the Arabian custom, and meant "The Man of Ghazali", or, as some think, "The Thread Merchant", owing to his father's trade in gazel or thread. As a young man he travelled widely, finally reaching Bagdad where he became the foremost philosophical instructor of his time. Not satisfied, however, with academic philosophy, he resumed his travels, wandering in search of Truth for eleven years. And Truth he found at last, so he felt, in the rapture of spiritual realization as taught and exemplified by the Sufis. Returning to his public life he led a reform in Mohammedanism, teaching the more symbolic and emotional interpretation of the Prophet's words. His long search for wisdom he himself describes in a remarkable confession called "The Rescuer from Error". This Rescuer is Mohammed with his Koran, but a Mohammed seen through Sufi eyes. As one commentary reads: "Al Ghazali was scarcely a typical Mohammedan teacher. He was, as his book will show, an independent thinker who reached his form of religious faith

only after seeking through all systems of philosophy. He had tasted the emptiness of materialism and had faced the black shadows of despair."

His testimony for Sufism is simple and direct. He found it a philosophy of realization which held God to be the one and only Reality and all else, illusion. Through the confusion of the seeming, the human soul, itself a fragment of Divinity, must grope its way back to its Source, impelled by a passionate yearning and ever-increasing ecstasy of self-surrender. What he describes is a true religion of devotion or *Bhakti*. As such it employs the imagery of human love and union, the only symbols capable of expressing even faintly the rapture of that final union with God, the Beloved. The religious poems of the Sufis can be read either sensuously or spiritually according to the state of mind of the reader. At their worst they are exquisite love poems; at their best they are the cry of beatitude. We find similar ecstatic outpourings among all peoples. Al Ghazali reveals their inner truth far better than any one to-day can reveal it. His confession goes straight to the heart of religion itself and is of immense value, in that it sheds light not only on the Sufi movement but upon all spiritual striving. For this reason we give it in part.

After reviewing the various forms of philosophy and belief, he says: "When I had finished my examination of these doctrines I applied myself to the study of Sufism. I saw that in order to understand it thoroughly one must combine theory with practice. The aim which the Sufis set before them is as follows: to free the soul from the tyrannical yoke of the passions, to deliver it from its wrong inclinations and evil instincts, in order that in the purified heart there should only remain room for God and for the invocation of His holy Name. It was more easy to learn

their doctrine than to practise it. I acquired a thorough knowledge of their researches, and I learned all that it was possible to learn of their methods by study and oral teaching. It became clear to me that the last stage could not be reached by mere instruction, but only by transport, ecstasy and the transformation of the moral being.

“To define health and satiety, to penetrate their causes and conditions, is quite another thing from being well and satisfied. To define drunkenness is quite a different thing to being drunk. In the same way there is a considerable difference between knowing renouncement, comprehending its conditions and causes, and practising renouncement and detachment from the things of this world. I saw that Sufism consists in experiences rather than in definitions, and that what I was lacking belonged to the domain, not of instruction, but of ecstasy and initiation. I saw that one can only hope for salvation by devotion and the conquests of one’s passions, a procedure which presupposes renouncement and detachment from this world of falsehood in order to turn toward eternity and meditation on God. Finally I saw that the only condition of success was to sacrifice honors and riches and to sever the ties and attachments of worldly life.”

Here begins an account of the terrible struggle he went through in determining to cast aside his position in Bagdad and all that went with it in the way of earthly fame and riches. It was a struggle that devastated his physical health, torn as he was between “the opposite forces of earthly passions and religious aspirations.” “On the one side”, he writes, “the world kept me bound to my post in the chains of covetousness, on the other side the voice of religion cried to me, ‘Up! Up! Thy life is nearing its end, and thou hast a long journey to make. All thy pretended

knowledge is naught but falsehood and fantasy!' ” At last religion won and he left Bagdad. From then on he dedicated himself to a life of meditation and prayer, following the forms of devotion which the Sufis had taught him.

“Ten years passed in this manner”, he continues. “During my successive years of meditation there were revealed to me things impossible to recount. All that I shall say for the edification of the reader is this: I learned from a sure source that the Sufis are the true pioneers on the path of God; that there is nothing more beautiful than their life, nor more praiseworthy than their rule of conduct, nor purer than their morality. The intelligence of thinkers, the wisdom of philosophers, the knowledge of the most learned doctors of the law would in vain combine their efforts in order to modify or improve their doctrine and morals; it would be impossible. With the Sufis, repose and movement, exterior and interior, are illumined with the light which proceeds from the Central Radiance of Inspiration. And what other light could shine on the face of the earth? In a word, what can one criticize in them? To purge the heart of all that does not belong to God is the first step in their cathartic method. The drawing up of the heart by prayer is the keystone of it, and the last stage is the being lost in God. I say the last stage, with reference to what may be reached by an effort of will; but to tell the truth, it is only the first stage in the life of contemplation, the vestibule by which the initiated enter.

“From the time that they set out on this path, revelations commence for them. They come to see in the waking state angels and souls of prophets; they hear their voices and wise counsels. By means of this contemplation of heavenly forms and images they rise by degrees to heights which

human language cannot reach, which one cannot even indicate without falling into great and inevitable errors. The degree of proximity to Deity which they attain is regarded by some as intermixture of being, by others as identification, by others as intimate union. But all these expressions are wrong. Those that have reached that stage should confine themselves to repeating the verse,—*What I experience I shall not try to say; call me happy, but ask me no more.* In short, he who does not arrive at the intuition of these truths by means of ecstasy, knows only the *name* of inspiration. The miracles wrought by the saints are, in fact, merely the earliest forms of prophetic manifestation. This state then, can be revealed to the initiated in ecstasy, and to him who is incapable of ecstasy, by obedience and attention, on condition that he frequents the society of Sufis till he arrives, so to speak, at an imitative initiation. Such is the faith which one can obtain by remaining among them, and intercourse with them is never painful.

“But behind those who believe comes a crowd of ignorant people who deny the reality of Sufism, hear discourses on it with incredulous irony, and treat as charlatans those who profess it. To this ignorant crowd the verse applies: ‘There are those among them who come to listen to thee, and when they leave thee ask of those who have received knowledge: What has he just said? These are they whose hearts God has sealed up with blindness and who only follow their passions.’ Among the number of convictions I owe to the practice of the Sufi rule is the knowledge of the true nature of inspiration.”

It is rare indeed for a great intellectual light, one who has in his mental grasp the processes of mind and nature, to perceive the emptiness of all outer knowledge and to feel that all he has gained is but dross beside realization of the

essence of things. There must have been a mighty yearning for Truth in the heart of Al Ghazali to have so cleansed it of the glamour of men's praise, that he had the vision to see and the strength to renounce. What he cast aside would seem to most men the crown of life itself,—wealth, comfort, adulation and an undisputed authority. Foremost leader and teacher of Islam, who could grasp the motive for such renunciation? Of this misunderstanding he himself writes: "The Imams of Irak criticized me with one accord. Not one of them could admit that this sacrifice had a religious motive, because they considered my position as the highest attainable in the religious community. 'Behold how far their knowledge goes!' "

Al Ghazali cannot be classed as a Poet-preacher, neither was he a Persian; but his was the liberating word which freed the Sufis from persecution and unsealed their song. For this reason we have included him in their ranks. He died in retirement at his own home, a Sufi to his last breath. His spirit is revealed in the prayer at the close of his Confession, and it really sums up his life: "I pray God the Omnipotent to place us in the ranks of His chosen, among the number of those whom He directs in the path of safety, in whom He inspires fervor lest they forget Him; whom He cleanses from all defilement, that nothing may remain in them except Himself; yea, of those whom He indwells completely, that they may adore none beside Him."

(To be continued)

My poet's vanity dies in shame before Thy sight. O Master Poet, I have sat down at Thy Feet. Only let me make my life simple and straight, like a flute of reed for Thee to fill with music.—*Tagore*

REPORT

A cable from India on February 16th brought the happy assurance that Swami Paramananda had safely reached Bombay where he was accorded a hearty reception by his Brothers of the Ramakrishna Mission. He was to reach Calcutta by the 19th, so as to be present at the great public celebration of the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna, to be held at the Head Monastery at Belur on the Ganges a few miles from Calcutta.

Both at the Vedanta Centre of Boston and at the Ananda-Ashrama the work goes steadily on. The Community House at the Ashrama is now open and is gradually filling up. Last Christmas Eve, at the Boston Centre, after a lovely Service, the members united in sending to the Ashrama a love-offering to be used in the furnishing of the new house. This generous thought inspired faithful hearts in California so that now three rooms are charmingly equipped and others are gradually losing the sense of bareness. Every day sees a little added touch—a table here, a chair or a rug there—supplied by some devoted friend. In this way the Community House is growing; it is truly the result of inspiration and loving co-operation.

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA'S WORK IN THE NORTHWEST

Splendid reports come to us of the results of Swami Prabhavananda's untiring activity in the Northwest. Only a short time ago under his inspiration and guidance, a Vedanta Society, of which he is Head, was founded at Portland, Ore. Now news comes to us of the organizing of another Society at Tacoma, Washington, where the Swami spent the 8th, 9th and 10th of February, giving three lectures in the Theosophical Hall. A friend sends us the following account: "At his first lecture, 'Evolution and Reincarnation', as well as at his second, 'Karma and Freedom', the

hall was filled to capacity and the interest shown was most intense. The Swami presented the truths of his subject so clearly and logically that, at the conclusion, expressions of satisfaction and delight were heard on every side.

On Wednesday afternoon—in his third lecture—he spoke on 'Avataras or Divine Incarnations'. Very lovingly did the Swami handle this subject which is of such vital and universal interest. The attendance was good considering the fact that the meeting came at a time when many are engaged with their duties in the workaday world. In the evening, an eager group of men and women gathered in the home where Swami Prabhavananda was being entertained, to listen to him in a less formal and more intimate way. After an hour of music and pleasant talk, during which time the Swami answered most satisfyingly many questions, it was suggested that a Class for study and the practice of meditation be formed. The idea was taken up with enthusiasm and the group was organized into a small Society. A president and secretary-treasurer was elected, and a committee appointed, looking toward the time when a Centre can be opened with a Swami in charge.

Though the meeting was most informal, the earnestness of those present was plainly apparent and we are praying that from this small shoot the mighty tree of Vedanta will grow, spreading its all-welcoming shade over many weary way-farers on the Path, enabling them to find rest, refreshment and soul-enlightenment beneath its sheltering branches."

The fresh vital West should respond to the lofty teachings of Vedanta, and we are happy that the Swami is finding such warm response from so many hearts. All success to his mission.

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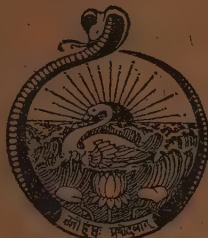
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Message of the East



APRIL, 1926

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—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tyndall.

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THINK ON ME

By Swami Paramananda



THINK on Me when thou hast reached
glory's heights;

Think on Me when thou hast fallen into
misery's uttermost depths.

Think on Me when world wounds thy
heart;

Think on Me when thou hast spoke or done aught
to wound thy brother.

Think on Me, oh, think on Me when thou art
drowned in despair.

I will purge thy heart of grief;

I will heal thy wounded soul

And plant a new seed of life to redeem thy
dead hope.

Why dost thou wander away from Me?

Why dost thou brood in darkness?

Come to Me with guileless heart:

I will not fail thee;

I will grant thee peace.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen.

—*Revelation.*

If your bonds be not broken whilst living, what hope of deliverance in death?

It is but an empty dream that the soul shall have union with Him because it has passed from the body.

If He is found now, He is found then.

If not, we do but go to dwell in the City of Death.

If you have union now, you shall have it hereafter.

—*Kabir.*

Everything seems flying towards me: the sunlight and the sunshine, the rustling of the forests and the forest breezes, beings of all ages and of all kinds—all seem beautiful and rendered transparent by the sun's glow. I am! I am in God! If I could only die now and be wafted through this joy to dissolution and redemption! But I will live on until my hour comes. Come, thou dark hour, whenever thou wilt! To me thou art light! I feel that there is light within me. O Eternal Spirit of the universe, I am one with Thee. I was dead, and I live,—I shall die and yet live. Everything has been forgiven and blotted out. There was dust on my wings. I soar aloft into the sun and into infinite space. I shall die singing from the fulness of my soul.—*Berthold Auerbach.*

Verily I say unto thee; the Blessed One has not come to teach death, but to teach life, and thou discernest not the nature of living and dying. . . . Self is death and truth is life. The cleaving to self is a perpetual dying, while moving in the truth is partaking of Nirvana which is life everlasting.—*Buddha.*

I am the first-born god of primeval matter, that is to say, the divine Soul, even the souls of the gods of everlastingness, and my body is eternity. . . . "He that never suffereth corruption" is my name.

—*Egyptian Book of the Dead.*

That Self (immortal Spirit) is a boundary, so that these worlds may not be confounded. Day and night do not pass that boundary, nor old age, death, and grief; neither good nor evil deeds. All evil-doers turn back from it, for the world of *Brahman* (the Supreme) is free from all evil. Therefore, he who has crossed that boundary, if blind, ceases to be blind; if wounded, ceases to be wounded; if afflicted, ceases to be afflicted. Therefore when that bank has been crossed, night becomes day indeed, for the world of *Brahman* is lighted up once for all.

—*Chandogya Upanishad.*

Only he who dwells in love, dwells in God; only to him who dwells in love, who is thoroughly imbued with love, is eternity opened here on earth; only he enjoys here below already a foretaste of its bliss. For He who dwelleth and ruleth in eternity is the all-animating Love,—is God.

—*Stunden der Andacht.*

The Resurrection is the work of the Wind of Heaven sweeping over the worlds. The angel born on the Wind does not say: "Arise, ye dead"; he says, "Arise, ye who live!"—*Balzac*

Holy is the true Light, and passing wonderful, lending radiance to them that endured in the heat of the conflict.

—*Church Service*

It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing.— *Jesus the Christ*

INVINCIBLE SPIRIT*By Swami Paramananda*

Easter is a very symbolic expression, and it is not only in Christendom that it is celebrated. After winter's devastation spring brings life and redemption, and Easter or Ascension stands for that. Nature gives us its interpretation. Physically and spiritually we rise and follow that great call of the soul, that higher call whose dictate every man and woman must sometimes follow in an effort to rise from the burial-ground of matter. Spring brings new life; it redeems even those trees and plants which we think are dead. If we can only understand its significance, not grasping so much its intellectual value, as giving ourselves to it, opening our heart and soul to it, we shall find it revives that which is tired and worn out within us.

The great truths of life are all written in nature. Sun, for instance, revealer of all things, dispeller of darkness, the giver of light and illumination, is a wonderful symbol for us to carry in our mind of the spiritual Sun rising in our soul as Truth, the real Source of light in man, the destroyer of darkness and gloom. In the East there are some sects who rise at the dawn. They feel their day will not be complete unless they are up in time to behold the rising sun and pour their oblation of worship before it. How may our day be better prepared than by rising early with a sense of spiritual vocation, with a feeling that we have a definite duty to perform and that the light of the sun is going to throw its glow on our path, revealing our way, directing our steps? That is why a Sunrise Service is a most beautiful thing. Nature has a great part in God's creation and when we approach it with spirit of understanding, then we gain benefit even from these outer events. It is not that the outer world suddenly opens be-

fore us with something unusual, but we are given the vision. Those who live too much in the external, for instance, miss the true beauty and significance of nature; it means very little to them. The mystic and seer, however, sees it as interwoven with God. It brings him upliftment, inspiration and a sense of adoration. It becomes symbolic in his life.

God is ever trying to reach us through many avenues: through man, through beast and birds, through trees, through sunlight—through all things. In the hour of distress when human voice cannot reach us, the note of a bird may arrest our mind, inspire us and make us forget our trouble. The voice of Truth is ever in the world. It is not that we do not hear it; we do not heed it. We close our eyes and our ears. We yield to our material nature and allow the living qualities within us, the soul's instinct, to be buried by material things. There is no burial-ground so depriving us of blessings as the burial-ground of matter. Let us not shut the doors of our soul! We brighten our cities with dazzling lights; but what avails if the inner life remains in the dark? We must bring in the light, taking it as a symbolic expression of God's benediction. Here is this redeeming, life-giving sun. If we open every door, it will penetrate us physically and revive us spiritually. Let us throw wide our whole being before the Sun of Truth, the Sun of Life, the Sun of Grandeur; then there will be nothing hidden, nothing calculating within us, nothing in darkness.

Our life and the best in us suffers and withers when we are cut off from our Source and sustenance. What is our life? This is a question which must rise in every human heart, and to find its answer is to find life's fulfillment. When that answer is found within the soul, there comes a

great sense of surety. It is the lesson which Easter holds for us,—that even death and tragedy are only apparent. Christ rose to show the man of flesh, the man who dreads death, the man who feels the sting of all physical suffering, that death is but a delusion, that life is eternal. Not only Christ: all Christ-spirits resurrect, and all people who are born of the Spirit. Do not think, however, that ascension means preserving the physical body as it is. Physical immortality might become a tremendous doom for a soul. Ascension is a spiritual thing. It is a new consciousness which dawns within us, enlarging our life, bringing greater vision and usefulness. We do rise: we rise even before we are dead, through this consciousness, through this vision and with such feeling that death touches us but very lightly. It does not destroy anything or annihilate anything. In the midst of this world's confusion we find an unbroken peace, a sense of stability which can never be overthrown. This is the real work of man,—to find his access into the infinite Life, so that in spite of all the apparent, changing conditions he can take his stand there and feel that he is a partaker of the divine grace.

Why should we be fretful? Why should we be fearful, and doubtful of our heritage? We ascend from the burial-ground of matter and find our place as it is given to us by God's hand; because we are His primarily: His children. Does not the Christ Ideal remind us to "be perfect even as our Father which is in Heaven?" That which is perfect is limitless and indestructible. We must find our contact with that perfect life, and the best way to find it is to forget as much as we can the limitations of the physical. We all need this inner contact, although we often altogether turn away from it. We must not do so. It will replenish our life, it will bring us inspiration, it will bring

new vitality into our physical being. Whenever there is any opportunity of rising from this plane to a higher one, we should give ourselves to it with all the power, with all the devotion, with all the intensity of our soul, that we may lift ourselves from the burial-ground of matter and see the Light as it is, in all its beauty and magnificence.

This is the heart of religion,—that a man walk with God, yielding himself to the Will of the Divine Intelligence. In our hurry, in our madness of material fever, we forget this. It is our real life. If it remains hidden and forgotten, then we go through this world as beggars, when we have a great heritage. Thus the Christ Ideal stands to remind man again and again and over again of the Truth that is in him so that he may not be altogether caught in the meshes of material things. In every turn we are reminded that life is eternal, that it cannot be destroyed, that man cannot die, and yet we dream these vacant dreams, we think that we are mortals, that we are frail and incapable, that we have no place in the divine realm. But spring redeems winter, and a Christ-spirit descends to the world to overcome death, to show in symbolic way that the Spirit of man rises over death, that it can never be buried, for flesh is not the real life.

One of the great mystics tells us that a Saviour or Avatar is the Messenger of God. He is like the Viceroy of a mighty monarch. God becomes man so that man may understand God. That is the simplest definition in regard to a divine Incarnation. It is not the small, selfish and cruel type of humanity, however, that is going to understand. People who are dogmatic, who have only a sectarian training, their concept of Christ or of any Saviour becomes a mockery for the simple reason that they do not follow in the footsteps of their Ideal. For

instance, in Christ's Incarnation His all-lovingness is one of the outstanding features. Who that lacks lovingness is going to understand Him? The best way we can revere any great being is by following in His footsteps, and that can only be done in one way,—by our life and conduct. We do not honor our chosen Ideal through fanatical means.

It is when we touch spiritual life directly that we find something definite, something of practical value for the larger world. People who are buried in dogmatic or materialistic thought, they have no expansion. They live in a little, narrow circle, going round and round, creating an atmosphere which is suffocating to their soul. No one can come near them without feeling that suffocation, that lack of freedom. God made us after His image, but we are trying to make God after our own. The many illustrations that we see around us show that man is making a caricature of his real being. We must follow the divine pattern. We cannot reverse the order of things. "First seek ye the Kingdom of Truth, all other things shall be added" is the eternal principle.

One of the most interesting little incidents in the Bible concerns the learned man who came to Jesus of Nazareth to learn the secrets of the Spirit. He found many things of value in His teaching, but he feared criticism, just as people of social position fear it to-day, so he did not come openly; he came at night when no one could see him, and said: "You are a Rabbi, you are a man of God, tell me of these things." And what was the answer? "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." The man thought to himself as we would think now: "What is he talking about? Is it possible for a man to enter the mother's womb a second time?" And Christ repeated: Except a man be born again of the Spirit he cannot under-

stand these things; this book of life is sealed for him. What is the significance of Christ's statement? Many lands have definite forms and rituals symbolizing second birth. In the Christian Church, for instance, there exist baptism and confirmation, while in India they have what they call the "twice-born," a man who being born in the flesh and brought up in the flesh, is given a second spiritual birth through which he is supposed to understand the law of spiritual life. We may have all forms of ritual, however, and yet not have access to the divine realm. It is not by artificial means that we can enter that Kingdom. There must be quality of soul. We must be spiritually reborn. It is to show us this that an Incarnate Spirit comes. As a man He comes, as a real leader and Saviour; but not with dazzling splendour, not with the pomp and glory of the material world. No! He comes just like the dawn, so subtly, with such gentle and soft light that only those who are wakeful, who have certain spiritual refinement, ever hear or know anything about His coming.

If Christ should be born to-day, do you suppose that people even in the very heart of what we call Christendom would understand Him unless they had the Christ-consciousness within them? They would be the first again to crucify Him if their spirit was not His Spirit. There are many who profess Christ and who will fight for Him, but the very fact that they fight for Him and use means which are alien to the Christ-spirit defeats their purpose. It is not by evil that we overcome evil. We know the simple, practical wisdom, that wherever there is darkness we must bring light. Light is the only remedy for darkness. We must kindle our lamp and keep it burning. Those who are not too clever, they pay heed to these things. The world may call them dull, but they are the best, the most intelli-

gent type among human beings. Kings and emperors come with desire to rule, to triumph, to trample people under their feet so that they may have glory; but the result is just the opposite. They are buried in the distant past and forgotten, while a simple, unpretentious, unarmed figure survives. It lives and continues to live, shedding the blessing of its life upon humanity.

The greatest lesson that we learn from religion is to find the essence. To-day we are altogether turning our eyes away from the essential. We are striving to preserve the things which cannot last. We are trying to dress up matter, saying, "This is what we are going to worship; this is what is going to survive," though we find at every instant that it fails us. It is like playing with dolls. There is within the soul of man, however, something which cannot be confined within narrow and dogmatic concepts, something which seeks expansion, which longs to see things as they are. The Hindus give the beautiful illustration of the mythical swan who when given a cup of milk and water mixed, can drink the milk, the essence, and leave the water. We are placed here in this world of great mixture, of good and evil, of things which are lasting and things which are perishable and we must learn to take the lasting, the essence, and let the rest go. When we have found our access into the Eternal, then we can make use of all the material things. It is not by destroying the physical that we are going to rise in spiritual grandeur, but by tuning our life, our thought, our conduct with spiritual principles. Then the same vision comes to us that we find in Christ's life, and that vision transforms the world of matter into divine beauty. Thus through our spiritual consciousness we rise, we rise even before we are dead and buried.

Within the body of man, within the house of clay, there

is something which is indestructible. Man is not weak; the Spirit of man is invincible. That eternal song has been sung throughout the ages. The voice of the great Upanishads tells us: "That which is vast and unbounded, which is not born, which does not die, That thou art, O man!", and the great Incarnate Spirits come to remind us that in our life, in our living, we must not keep our gaze fixed only upon the changing and the fleeting, but upon Something beyond these apparent conditions, Something that never changes. As we fasten our mind and soul and heart's interest on that, we rise, we ascend, and this is the real ascension.

There are people who cling to the external,—they build tombs and mosques to preserve the dead bodies. The Hindus, however, are peculiarly free from that element. They cremate because they have such absolute faith in the invincible quality of the soul. They know that the soul continues to exist. And it does continue to exist. We bury it through our thought, and we help it to rise through our thought, through our feeling and aspiration. People who are already buried under the burden of material life, it is difficult for them to rise even after they die; but those who live with lightness, with spiritual yearning, with high vision, death means nothing to them, it touches them very lightly because they have already ascended. These are practical facts and we must apply them in our life. The concept of immortality is the very rock of religion. We cannot be greater or better; we cannot be truly spiritual unless we have this established in our soul. Why do men do things which are mean and selfish? Why do they become criminals? It is because of a constant, feverish unrest—they fear that they are going to lose their opportunity. As soon, however, as we can implant in their soul

this idea that Eternity is behind them and before them, above them and below them, they are not going to have this restlessness. They are now looking only to one little point, one small, limited span of existence. When their vision is extended, when they see the immensity of life and feel themselves to be definitely a part of that great immensity, it is going to take away all their fear, all their meanness and pettiness: everything will then have for them a spiritual significance. There is no man strong enough to live without God, without Truth, no matter how intellectual or clever he may be. Our greatest calamity is when we make this of secondary importance and seek first the material glory, thinking that afterwards we shall find God. We never find Him afterwards. We only find in our life what we have followed in our thought, in our consciousness. That is the reason why Christ repeated, Except a man be born again, born of the Spirit, not of corruption, he cannot understand these things or find his access into the Kingdom of God. Spiritual birth means transformation.

When the soul is inspired by high vision the little body cannot interfere with it. Why, this soul of man, this part of God is indestructible, deathless, diseaseless! Nothing can destroy it! "Sword cannot cut it, fire cannot burn it, water cannot wet it, air cannot dry it." It is immortal and invincible. Such is the heritage of man. The Saviours and the great spiritual seers prove it every instant. We must learn this lesson. We must not fear—fear should not remain in our mind and heart; doubt must not dwell there. We cultivate skepticism because we think that is the rational way of looking at things; but it only robs us of all that is beautiful and fine in our character. Faith is constructive, while doubt is destructive. As we increase

our faith in spiritual immensity, as we find our own harmony and peace, we shall benefit the world at every turn. Our thoughts will be of calm nature, our actions will be fundamental and creative. Then even casually and unconsciously, we shall convey something to our fellow-beings, and as we share our blessings with others, our life will be complete, the purpose of our existence will be fulfilled.

ABSOLUTE RELIGION

By Theodore Parker

(From "A Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion.")

It is sometimes feared that Christianity is in danger; that its days are numbered. Of the Christianity of the church, no doubt it is true. . . . But the Christianity of Christ, absolute religion, absolute morality, cannot perish: never till love, goodness, devotion, faith, reason, fail from the heart of man; never till God melts away and vanishes, and nothing takes the place of the All-in-All. Religion can no more be separated from the race than thought and feeling; nor absolute religion die out more than wisdom perish from among men. Man's words, thoughts, churches, fail and pass off like clouds from the sky that leave no track behind. But God's word can never change. It shines perennial like the stars. Its testimony is in man's heart. None can outgrow it; none destroy.

For eighteen hundred years the Christianity of Christ has been in the world to warn and encourage. Violence and cunning . . . have opposed it. Every weapon learning could snatch from the arsenals of the past, or science devise anew, or pride and cruelty and wit invent, has been used by mistaken man to destroy this fabric. Not a stone has fallen from the heavenly arch of real religion; not a

loop-hole been found where a shot could enter. But alas, vain doctrines, follies, absurdities without count, have been plied against the temple of God, marring its beauteous shape. That Christianity continues to live, spite of the traditions, fables, doctrines wrapped about it, is proof enough of its truth. Reason never warred against love of God and man, never with the Christianity of Christ, but always with that of the church. . . .

Can man destroy absolute religion? He cannot with all the arts and armies of the world destroy the pigment that colors the emmet's eye. He may obscure the truth to his own mind. But it shines forever unchanged. So boys of a summer's day throw dust above their heads to blind the sun; they only hide it from their blinded eyes.

THE POINTS OF PERFECTION

(From an Old English Translation of "The Mirror of Simple Souls," a mystic treatise written by an unknown French Contemplative, 13th Century).

O soul, touched of God, dissevered from sin, in the First Estate of grace, ascend by divine grace into the Seventh Estate of grace, where that the soul has fulhead of perception by divine fruition in life of peace! And among you, actives and contemplatives, that to this life may come, hear now some of the might of the pure love, of the noble love, and of the high love of the free soul. . . . This soul has six wings, as have the Seraphim; . . . with two she covers the face of our Lord; that is to say, the more knowledge this soul hath of the divine Goodness, the more she knows not the amount of a mote as in regard to His Goodness; the which is not comprehended but of Himself. And with two she covers His feet. This is to say, the more that this soul hath knowledge of the sufferance that Jesus Christ suffered for us, the more perfectly she knows

that she knows naught, as in regard of it, . . . the which is not known but of Him. And with two she flies, and so dwells in standing and sitting. This is to say, that all she covets and loves and prizes, it is the divine Goodness. These be the wings that she flies with, and so dwells in standing, for she is always in the sight of God; and sitting, for she dwells always in the divine Will.

Whereof should this soul have dread, though she be in the world? And the world, the flesh, . . . and the four elements, the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, tormented her and despised her and devoured her, if it might so be, what might she lose if God dwelled with her? Oh, is He not Almighty? Yea, without doubt: He is all might, all wisdom and all goodness, our Father and Brother and our true Friend. He is without beginning and shall be without ending; He is without comprehending, but of Himself. . . . This soul nor desires despite nor poverty, nor tribulation, nor disease, nor masses, nor fasting, nor orisons. . . . She is alone in love. This is to say, that she has nor comfort, nor affection, nor hope in creature that is made in heaven or in earth; but only in the goodness of God. . . . For herself she cares not, but God cares for her, and Him she loves so much that herself she cannot love. "This soul," says Love, "has so great faith in God that she has no dread to be poor, for as much as her love is rich; for faith teaches her that right so as she hopes of God, right such shall she find Him." (*Reason has asked Love to expound the nine points of perfection in a soul. We omit the description of the first five. Love now comes to the sixth Point which is, that none may teach the free soul*).

"Now for God!" says Reason, "Lady Love, say what is this to say!" "This is to say," says Love, "that this soul is of so great knowledge that though she had all the

knowledge of all creatures that ever were, be, and shall be, she would think it naught as in regard of that that she loves."

"The Seventh Point," says Love, "is this: that men may not rob her. Oh, how might they rob her? For though she were robbed of her honour, goods, friends, heart, body and life, yet rob they her naught, if God with her dwell."

"The Eighth Point, Reason," says Love, "is that men may give her naught. Yea," says Love, "what might they give her? Though they give her all that ever was given, and shall be given, it should be naught in regard of that that she loves and shall love."

"But God Himself, Lady Love," says this soul, "loves in me and shall love. . . . He only is my God that none can one word of say, nor all those of Paradise one only point attain nor understand, for all the knowing that they have of Him."

"The Ninth Point," says Love, "is this: that this soul has no will. Oh, without fail, no! For all that she wills . . . it is that which God wills that she will. And that wills she . . . for God's Will to fulfil, and not for her own will. And this may not she will of herself; but it is the Will of God that wills in her. So that this soul has no will but the Will of God, that makes her will all that she ought to will.

"This soul has in her the Master of Virtues that is called Divine Love, that has merged in them all and to Him united. So that she is not with herself nor with virtues." "With whom, then?" says Reason, that would by asking learn. "That ye wit of me, Reason," says Love: "that her has all turned in me." "And what be ye, Love?" says Reason. "Be ye not a virtue within us, save that ye be above us?" "I am God," says Love; "For Love is God and

God is Love. And this soul is God by condition of Love, and I am God by nature divine. And this is hers by righteousness of Love. So that this precious, loved of me, is learned and led of me out of herself; for she is turned to me, in me. This is the eagle that flies high, so right high, and yet more high than does any other bird, for she is feathered with fine love. And she beholds above others the beauty of the sun and the brightness of the sun. And the heat therein gives her in food the gum of the cedar. . . Such a soul has no matter in her that might blemish her clear sight, sithen that she is made naught only by virtue of very meekness. And she is common to all, by largesse and perfect charity. And she is alone in God by the divine touchings of pure, fine love."

Meditation of Pure Love has but only one intent, and is this: that she loves always truly, without willing any guerdon. And this may not the soul do but if she be out of herself, . . . for they that have will that God do their will, willing of His comforts to feel, they trust not perfectly in His Goodness alone, but in the gifts of His riches that He has to give. "Without fail," says this soul, "who that well loves, he thinks neither of taking nor of asking, but of giving without anything withholding. Therefore true love has but only one intent, and that is that she might always love truly. . . . And she wills naught but one thing; and that is, that the Will of God be always in her done.

"This soul," says Love, "swims in the sea of joy. . . . She feels no joy, for she herself is joy. She swims and drenches in joy, for she lives in joy without feeling any joy. So is joy in her, that she herself is joy by the virtue of joy that has merged her in Him. And so is the Will of the Loved and the will of this soul turned into one as fire and flame."

THE PARIJATA FLOWER

By Swami Atulananda

(Reprinted from "Prabuddha Bharata.")

"In whatever form a man seeks to worship Me with faith, in that form I make his faith firm and unflinching."

Bhagavad-Gita

In ancient times in a village of Bengal a pious Brahmin and his family lived a happy, simple life. They were of the old orthodox type, devoted to each other and to God. The wife worshipped her husband, the husband cherished his wife, and the children, two boys, honoured their parents. The door of their little cottage always stood wide open to friends and strangers alike. Under their hospitable roof any belated wayfarer was sure to meet with a hearty welcome, and no beggar ever was turned away disappointed. When a wandering monk happened to pass through the village and halting at their door in the name of God called for alms, the boys would run to their mother and say, "Mother, a Mahatma has come. May we give him food?" "Yes, my children," the mother would reply, "Offer it with reverence. May the holy man bless you." Then the boys carrying a little rice and lentil soup would place it respectfully in the cocoanut-shell that was held out as begging bowl, and the monk blessing the children, would pass on. Thus, smoothly, life moved by. The gods being pleased bestowed on the family not only a fair measure of prosperity but also an abundance of contentment.

Now it happened one day that the Brahmin after his early morning devotions went to the village market to buy fish for the midday meal. Squatting on the ground behind their baskets the fisherwomen with loud, rancorous voices cried, "Fish! Fish! The best in the market!" One woman, the most vociferous of all, seeing the Brahmin, hailed him

with, "Oh, Brahmin! where are you going? Come and buy from me!" The Brahmin smiled and halting at her basket after examining her catch, struck a bargain. Now when the fish was being weighed he noticed with horror that against it on the balance was placed a Salagrama—a sacred stone used in worship as an emblem of Lord Vishnu. Filled with indignation he upbraided the woman for her sacrilegious conduct of profaning a sacred symbol of the Lord. But he found her quite ignorant of the meaning of the Salagrama, and when he offered to buy it she was willing to let him have it for next to nothing, as any ordinary stone of the same weight would serve her purpose equally well.

The Brahmin reverently carried the Salagrama to his house where he purified it by bathing it in milk and Ganges water. Then he began to worship Vishnu to whom the stone was sacred. That night he had a dream and with the dream, a vision. Lord Vishnu stood before him. "My Lord!" the Brahmin exclaimed in great joy, "what have I done to deserve the honour of your visit to my humble hut?" The Lord, smiling sweetly, said in a very gentle voice, "Good Brahmin, don't you know that I bring many afflictions to those who worship Me? By depriving them of worldly happiness I draw their hearts closer to Myself and fill them with the spirit of renunciation." Then the vision vanished.

The Brahmin awoke. He was not a little puzzled by the strange message of the dream. A strain of sadness mingled with his joy, for he was not quite willing to have the flow of his peaceful life interrupted by calamities. On the other hand, he knew very well that it was his duty as a Brahmin, as one of the great priestly caste, to worship before the holy Salagrama. At last he decided to be true to his faith,

and morning and evening he worshipped, placing flowers and fragrant sandal on the stone after having washed it with holy water, uttering Vedic texts as he did so. And he burned incense and a little light in honour of his God.

This went on for some time. Then one evening at the hour of dusk his little son came running home from the woods crying, and showed on his foot two tiny spots where a venomous adder, stepped on unwittingly, had left his deadly marks. A few hours later the child expired in his mother's arms. The lifeless little body was carried to the cremation ground. When the last flames of the fire were extinguished, the stricken parents carried home a casket with ashes, all that was left of their darling, sometime to be consigned to the tender care of Mother Ganges, the holy river, in whose embrace the remains of so many pious Hindus find final rest. The father remembered the vision. But faithfully, though with aching heart, he continued to worship before the Salagrama. Now it happened that a few days later cholera broke out in the village, and among the first victims of this dreadful disease was counted the other son. "Thy will be done, oh Lord!" the Brahmin sighed with a trembling heart, and he continued to worship before the Salagrama. But the bereaved mother, utterly disconsolate at the loss of her two boys, died of grief.

The Brahmin well-nigh gave in to despair. He had no one left. His cottage was empty. No child's laughter to cheer him, no tender word of welcome when he entered his little home. On his bed his weary eyelids closed, but he could not sleep. Days and nights were to him like so many ages. Then, one night when he was dozing a little, he was roused by a voice. "Good Brahmin," the voice spoke, "don't you know that I am the Friend of those who possess nothing—of those who have resigned themselves entirely to

Me?" Hearing these words, a great peace entered his desolate heart. Lord Vishnu had taken his all, but He had not forsaken him! With a hopeful mind he rose, and at early dawn, taking with him the Salagrama he left his cottage. In the forest he made for himself a little shelter near a pond, and there he gave himself entirely to God and devoted all his time to worship. Sometimes a great pain would steal over him, a feeling of anguish, an uncontrollable longing for his departed ones. But then he remembered the sweet voice, "I am the Friend of those who possess nothing—of those who have resigned themselves entirely to Me." The Lord was his Friend. He surely would not forsake his beloved ones. And with fervour renewed, he worshipped before the Salagrama.

Now one morning, when after his ablutions he was occupied with his devotions near the pond, a slight disturbance in the water attracted his attention. There was a bubbling sound, little ripples formed, and these increased into waves, till the entire pond became a mass of commotion. Astonished and hardly able to believe his eyes, he watched. Then to the surface came a bright, golden figure of shining beauty. The figure approached, and before him stood a celestial nymph. Her voice was like music as she addressed him softly with the words, "Holy Brahmin, your faith is unparalleled. As reward I have brought for you a Parijata flower. It comes from Vishnu's garden. No such flower ever before has come to earth." Then dropping the flower in his lap, she vanished. Examining the flower, the Brahmin thought, "This certainly is a divine creation. No flower of this world can compare with it in beauty of shape and colour, and the fragrance it emits is exquisitely delicate. But what shall I do with it? Let me take it to the king, for it is more fit to embellish a

palace than my poor little forest-hut." Accordingly he took it to the king, and then returned to the woods and his devotions.

Now the king had two wives, and as he had only the one flower, he gave it to the elder queen. At this the younger queen became jealous and angry. Locking herself in her room, she began to weep. The king tried to explain matters, but she would not listen unless she also was given a Parijata flower as beautiful as that of the elder queen. The king, at his wits' end what to do, at last summoned his minister and told him to go to the Brahmin and order him to bring another Parijata flower within twenty-four hours. If he disobeyed he would be beheaded. The poor Brahmin receiving this order, greatly frightened, betook himself to prayer. Then in the midst of his supplications he was startled by a voice asking him what he wanted. Opening his eyes, he saw the same celestial nymph.

"You are the cause of my impending death," the Brahmin exclaimed. "Unless you give me another Parijata I must die!"

"But that is impossible," the nymph replied. "Indra gave me that one flower once when he was greatly pleased with me. These Parijatas are exceedingly rare even in heaven."

The Brahmin, however, continued to plead with her most earnestly. Then, at last, she said, "Well, I will take you to heaven. Ask Indra himself." And all of a sudden the Brahmin found himself in Indra's presence. Being asked by Indra what he wanted, he told his story.

"But," said Indra, "I cannot procure another flower. These Parijatas belong to Vishnu. Ask Him."

So the Brahmin went to Vishnu. He found his Lord seated on a throne of glory, surrounded by a galaxy of angels bright as the midday sun. Half blinded by this

heavenly sight, he threw himself at Vishnu's feet. With choking voice he told his Lord what had happened, and prayed to be delivered from his impending doom. Vishnu, coming down from His throne and gently touching the prostrate body of the Brahmin, said, "My child, I am pleased with you. I have watched your long and fervent devotions as you worshipped me in the Salagrama. Rise and come with Me to My garden. I will give you many flowers."

The Brahmin beholding the Lord's sweet, smiling face felt comforted. Rising to his feet he followed Vishnu. They came to a garden-gate, and entering, the Brahmin was overwhelmed with joy, seeing the beauty of this paradise. His body became light as air. He moved without effort. An ethereal atmosphere seemed to fill and sustain him. He felt ecstatic. Birds were singing their heavenly songs as he passed by trees and plants laden with fruits and fragrant flowers. Shining, smiling faces greeted him on all sides. He was in the land of the spirits. On a velvety lawn a beautiful boy was playing with a deer. "There," the Lord said, pointing to the child, "is one of my Parijata flowers." The boy looked up, and seeing the Brahmin came running towards him with out-stretched arms. "Father!" he exclaimed, "have you come at last? I am so happy!" Then from behind a bush another boy came running—the Brahmin's eldest son. A little farther on he came upon his wife. "These" the Lord said, "are my Parijata flowers." Thus the family was happily reunited in Vishnu's heaven.

"Inscrutable, oh Lord, are Thy ways," the Brahmin said in great humility and joy. "My apparent misfortunes were but angels in disguise." And Vishnu, in the words of Sri Krishna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, said, "No one who practises virtue, My son, comes to an evil end."

THE EMBODIED IDEAL

By Count Hermann Keyserling

(From: "The Travel Diary of a Philosopher").

Faith in the religious sense does not mean believing-to-be-true, it means striving after self-realization by concentrating the powers of the mind upon a given ideal. And the incomparable effect of living divine men (where we can think of them at all) is due to the fact that they made their own ideal incomparably clear to their followers, and thus increased its formative force to a tremendous degree. . . . Belief is an *a priori* quality, an independent creative power which justifies itself by itself. Modern man does not know such faith. His faith is a tender plant which may succumb to the slightest wound, and of all sufferers disappointed man is in the worst position, because loss of faith really devitalizes. Without faith, full self-consciousness is impossible. Because faith is lacking, so many people hanker to-day after a new religion; they need an external focus in order to collect their inner forces into one unity, for very few have reached by now that degree of inward independence which makes them incapable of disappointment, without external assistance. . . .

Doubtlessly it is a matter of import who the man is to whom one gives one's faith. An enlightened mind can still illumine dark existences, a genius of love can soften even hardened hearts, while lesser men are unable to do so, no matter how strong the faith is which they inspire. . . . No teacher can give what is not existent in a latent state; he can only waken that which is asleep, he can liberate what is imprisoned and bring to light what has been concealed. This is sufficient to secure the rank which men have always given to him, for it happens all too rarely that an individual becomes conscious of himself without external

assistance. Without it, latent forces manifest themselves only exceptionally.

On what depends ultimately and metaphysically the desire to give ourselves up to something higher than ourselves, our happiness in being allowed to behold the higher Being, and the tremendous inner progression which it brings with it? It depends on the fact that man sees in what is above him a truer expression of himself than the one which he is able to present. Everyone feels only too strongly how imperfectly he realizes his true being in his appearance. He does not act in accordance with his self, nor does he think as he intends to, and he is different from what inwardly he feels himself to be. . . . Every one knows that he is essentially more than what he can express, and he therefore recognizes himself better in somebody else's perfection than he does in his own imperfect form. In the same way we sometimes perceive a truth instantaneously which we would never have found by ourselves and we say: "That is really what we meant." For this reason, too, we feel marvelously uplifted and enlarged in the presence of perfect beauty, for our being finds its finally adequate means of expression only in perfect shape. . . .

Anyone who has ever met a great man has said to himself; "I always knew him." Of course he did. This, then, is the final explanation of the immense effect which the mere existence of such a man radiates. He shows men what every one could be, what all men are at bottom, in spirit and in truth. And just as the clear expression of that which our consciousness gropes for vainly, not only makes us happy, but also accelerates our progress, so does the anticipated expression of ourselves which a great man means to us, help us all to more rapid self-realization.

This brings us to the root of the recognition that the mere existence of a saint is more beneficent than all the good actions of the world; this explains, moreover, the ultimate significance of a saviour. He gives an example to mankind; this is what Christ too intended. And in so doing, he renders the extremest service which one being can render to another. He shows men their profoundest selves in a mirror; he makes their own ideal clear to them. He embodies it visibly, and thus gives to the creative forces which impel every one towards heaven, the longed-for aim and example. Now they know whither they are to go, now they know the range of their possibilities. And thus it can happen that the mere existence of one great man who has personally no purpose in external life, can give a new direction to the lives of all.

REPORT

Word comes that Swami Paramananda is receiving warm welcome from the Motherland he is revisiting after an absence of fourteen years. As is the Hindu custom in welcoming holy men, the Swami's fellow-countrymen have greeted him at every turn with garlands, flowers and offerings of fruit. In Bombay, his port of entry, two public lectures were arranged. The attendance both times was large. The Swami's message was an urgent appeal to his Indian hearers to be the thing that their philosophy taught. He reached the head monastery of the Ramakrishna Mission, at Belur near Calcutta, in time to share in the great public celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday, and it is supposed that he is still there as his name is down as a speaker at a great convention of Swamis to be held at Calcutta April 2nd.

The members of Ananda-Ashrama have had lately a feast

of music. Mrs. Laura Kelsey Allen, a violinist of distinction, played several times at the Sunday Services, giving rare pleasure, while on March 21st, Mr. Jetson-Ryder, a well-known concert singer contributed the gift of his rare voice to the musical program.

EXTRACTS FROM BOMBAY PAPERS

“Swami Paramananda, President, Vedanta Centre, Boston, arrived here last Friday after an absence from India of nearly twenty years. A public reception under the chairmanship of Mr. K. Natarajan was given to the Swami last Saturday. The Swami said that the message he would give to India as a result of his experience in the West was that the true joy lay not in external possessions, but in the inner vision and self-consecrated service of others. That was also the message of Hinduism—”

* * *

“Under the auspices of the Western India Vivekananda Society, a public meeting was held this evening to welcome Srimat Swami Paramananda. . . The hall was tastefully decorated with flowers and on the platform were seated Some Swamijiis of the Ramakrishna Mission. A large number of citizens of Bombay attended the function.” (There follows a long account of Swami Paramananda’s work in the West—publications, etc., then the article continues:) The President in opening the proceedings said that the Swami had been away from India a very long period which he had devoted to the dissemination of the highest truths of Universal Religion, the greatest gift of his motherland to the world. An Address was then presented to the Swamiji which referred to the great part he had played in furthering the Mission of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. He had considerably popularised the truths of Vedanta and had been successful in founding two important centres—the

Vedanta Centre at Boston and the Ananda-Ashrama at La Crescenta in the arms of the beautiful Sierra Madre Mountains in California. Swami Paramananda in thanking the members of the Society said that the proper way of responding to their welcome was not by a long speech, using calculated words, but by expressing his own feelings in words that expressed the spirit of the soul. He said that the only message he had to give to the people of India was the great truth which Sri Ramakrishna had given and demonstrated in his own life,—the establishment of fellowship among all the followers of the different religions of the world knowing them to be but so many forms of the one universal and eternal Religion.”

BOOK REVIEW

Swami Prabhavananda, Founder and Head of the Vedanta Societies at Portland, Ore. and Tacoma, Wash., is the author of an illuminating little booklet entitled “Sub-conscious Mind and Its Control.” The Swami brings to bear upon this very popular subject a mind enriched by the profound philosophy of the Indo-Aryans, and fortified by its own realizations, lacking which, as the Swami says, the words of the so-called psychologists of the present day “sound like the prattling of children.” Not only does the Swami illumine with the light of Vedic knowledge the nature and functions of the sub-conscious, but he also throws light upon the terms and tenets of Eastern thought by relating them to our modern psychological concepts.

This little booklet is published by the Vedanta Society of Portland, and can be obtained directly from the Society, 616 Kraemer Building, Second and Washington Streets, Portland, Oregon, or from the Ananda-Ashrama.

—S. D.

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



MAY, 1926

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"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tryndall.

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WHAT IS YOGA ?

By Swami Paramananda



WHAT is Yoga? I am going to give a simple, direct answer to this question, although it is a subject some people like to veil in mystery. Yoga literally means union. It is a Sanskrit word, a very simple word, but tremendously inclusive. Also it is a sacred word—so very sacred that over it hangs a hush of silence. The idea which it contains is the same as that which was later on developed and unfolded through some of the Christian mystics,—the idea of mystic union. Union with whom? Union with what? What does this union signify? Its spiritual significance is absolute union with the Source of our being; surmounting all obstacles, we find our access into the divine realm. As the Yoga system unfolded, however, it likewise gave man access into his physical being. It was never used for any ordinary purpose, but one part merely branched out into physical culture because those great teachers who evolved it found it necessary to add to it practical methods of self-control.

It is not enough to tell a person that he must meditate, that he must pray, that he must merge himself with the infinite Life; we must give him the means by which he may do this. So with Yoga another aspect had to be considered,—the taming of the flesh, of the mind, of all

evil propensities. Now it is our experience that as we begin to practise this, there grows naturally within the soul a concentrated purpose. Instead of scattering our strength and energy through many, many channels, we begin to focus our being; we learn to direct our interest. This implies physical, mental and moral concentration. No man can do his best until his body is focussed—unified, and this focussing and unifying means becoming stronger. Even the physical body becomes more efficient. A person, for instance, who is nervous and irritable, who cannot sit still for a moment, that person learns through this practice to have proper control of his physical forces, and as he gains mastery over them, his physical being grows more and more poised. There comes upon him a sense of tranquillity, for the body cannot be tranquil without the mind becoming equally so. Body and mind react upon each other. We would not have so many nervous breakdowns and troubles which are alien to human destiny if we applied this knowledge.

Is there anything mysterious about this? Is it not the most simple means of living a normal life? The Hindus have taught it in India by means of their system of Yoga for hundreds of years. They have always taught it very simply and directly, because they have no ulterior motive. This is one of the things I want you to remember. I know of no great spiritual teacher who would proclaim himself to be a Yogi or a Master, or who, if he had any knowledge along such lines, would make a trade of it. That would be impossible. It does not go with the vision of Yoga and the Yogis. Such a being—one who had real claim to mastery, not by fancy, but by actual right—if you should bring him to New York, for instance, and announce that he was a great Master, who was going to give lessons on the

mysteries of Yoga, I think he would altogether fade away from your midst. It would be a very painful experience for him, absolutely inconsistent with his life.

It is good for you to know these things. Idle curiosity is worse than ignorance. At least there is excuse for ignorance; but when intellectual, seemingly rational people run hither and thither without knowing their purpose, aim or objective, it is a tremendous waste of time and energy, and that wastefulness can react only in one way: as a great bar to progress. I do not want to paint the dark side, however, but to give something constructive. This age-old, very beneficent system that was evolved in India, gave man definite methods by which he could control his physical being and thus express those innate qualities of soul which give access to that inner Kingdom we read of in the Bible. "Kingdom of Heaven is within". One who finds it lacks for nothing; there is immensity of richness there. We, however, look without, and see only our imperfections, our limitations, our many defective qualities. Thus when we are told that our spiritual heritage is God, Infinitude, we cannot fathom it, although we may try to believe in it with a morbid sense of faith. What we need is the means by which we can realize it. We cannot live on words. We must gain our own access into the Kingdom. We must find a way to work these things out for ourselves, and that is what the system of Yoga teaches through concentration, meditation and self-mastery.

As we gather our forces through these means, we seem to open another vista altogether. One who ordinarily says: "I am weak, I cannot do this, I am altogether a slave of my nature", that same person begins to realize that he is born here with a definite purpose which is to master his nature, and that his religion will amount to nothing until he can

put into practical application these high ideals. Instead of sitting in a corner brooding with a sense of uselessness, he lifts up his head, he becomes erect. Right here is a symbolic thought. In the system of Yoga tremendous emphasis is laid on the spinal column of the human being. A person must have a flexible and erect spine. Even some of the Roman philosophers recognized the fact that man is born erect and that if he does not learn to hold himself so, instead of being held erect by others, he will have a miserable existence. The reason is that we cannot have freedom of life if there is anything crooked in our thoughts, in our habits, or even in our physical construction. It is very essential to keep the body absolutely free and upright, and the Yogis teach us this. It is not anything artificial. No one can accomplish it through physical exercise alone, though that will help to a certain extent. It is in the thought. There are certain thoughts which make the body tense, brittle, which bring it almost to the breaking point; then again there are other thoughts which make it flexible and relaxed so that the current of life can flow and circulate through it without hindrance. Do you suppose people can bring this about merely by following certain physical methods? If so, we could almost challenge God with our scientific inventions.

Science plus spiritual intuition makes the complete Yoga system. Thinking of the physical and nothing but the physical can become a tremendous hindrance to a man. Take some of the modern healing movements, for instance; many of their aims and ideals are most wonderful, identical with what we know in India as the monistic system of philosophy,—not recognizing sickness, not recognizing anything that makes for sickness, but always pointing the mind to that which is infinite, unlimited and vast. Such a view-

point, so long as it is kept pure, is a mighty asset. It is what we need to overcome the sickness and the evil of life; but when we begin to think of it only in relation to our own betterment, no matter how great our need may be, we shall find that though we may have it in theory, we have lost the ideal. Same way it is in connection with Yoga. There are certain definite principles which it gives us, and these principles we must follow in order to master ourselves physically and mentally so that spiritually we may find our access into that inner Kingdom. That is what is called union,—body, mind and heart uniting themselves for a great end.

The Yoga training, when we understand the import of it, is not limited to spiritual benefit. It makes one an all-round man. Man is a homogeneous being; but how many of us can claim really to be so. We find that our hands and feet are preying on each other, that our mind and heart, instead of working together with absolute unity of purpose, are going in different directions. That is the reason we often accomplish so little. We lack co-ordination, we lack concentration. With the Yogi, however, the physical body is harmonious and lends itself to any task he undertakes; moreover, the mind is flexible, and what is more, possesses a marvelous power of introspection. Even science recognizes the value of that. It realizes that unless a man's faculties are quickened, unless he has power of penetration, he cannot accomplish his utmost. In every branch of learning we shall find that more or less in one way or another they follow the identical method which Yoga gives: complete union with the subject of knowledge. There is no possibility of any knowledge, or any revelation until these two, mind and subject, come together. We may copy somebody else's ideas, we may

form them into a system, but real clarified truth comes only as a result of this union.

Whether it is in science or music, in art or religion, wherever we find any clarified expression of life, it comes as the fulfillment of what the Hindus call Yoga or union. There is nothing between you and the object of your search. It is like projecting a light. We project our light into whatever is hidden and it becomes revealed. We can see clearly; no longer is there any darkness connected with it. We can apply this to every problem; but the question is, how can we find the light? Must we borrow it from some one? Is it hidden somewhere in mystery, or do we already have it within us? Of course we have it within us! Because of that light we are able to think, we are able to feel, we are able to learn and remember, only we do not know how to control it. When we have gained control, when that light of thought is focussed, instead of being scattered and dissipated, when we have made it steady and one-pointed, then it becomes like a search-light, brilliant and revealing.

This is the sum and substance of the system of Yoga, but it is only an outline. It implies a great deal that we must put into practice. For example, sit down for a moment and try not to think of anything. Ordinarily we imagine that to think of nothing would be very simple; but when we try to do it even for an instant we find it almost impossible. It is not that we lack the power. We have tremendous amount of power, but the mind is a very active instrument, not even for a single moment does it want to be passive. It is alert, it is keen, and it is very restless. The thing is to bring it to the point where it will be fruitful and productive as well. This training of the mind is a most gigantic task for the individual. Not that

the task itself is so difficult; in reality it is very simple, but our preconceived ideas, our past habits, our negative thoughts make it seem difficult.

We stand in our own light. We remind ourselves constantly that it is impossible to control the thinking process, that it cannot be done. We complain that every time we try to concentrate, every time we try to quiet the mind, there comes a terrible rush of thoughts and we are conscious of a great disorder. We fail to realize, however, that this rush of thoughts is constantly going on within us, this disorder is ever present in our consciousness, only ordinarily we do not notice it, and we wonder why we have misery and unhappiness. We blame others for our misfortune. We seek to account for it by outer reasons, not realizing that there cannot be any reason for unhappiness, discontent or restlessness save in our failure towards ourselves.

This is something for you to carry as a mental picture,—something to infuse into the minds of your children. Whenever they are fretful, whenever they are unhappy, instead of trying to justify their unhappiness, seek to give them inward sight. Let them see that no one can bother them, that no one can hinder them once they have made their connection within. For lack of this knowledge we most of us have a very vague way of looking on life. For instance, we meet a person who has evolved a sense of intuition, who is calm and poised under all conditions, never affected by outer events, and we are filled with tremendous admiration. We wonder how it has come to him, but it does not occur to us that it has not come to him accidentally. Instead of vaguely admiring, we should seek to find out how he has developed these qualities, so that we may also develop them. This is where practical training begins.

Man is born to conquer nature. That is the greatest and most dynamic thought given by the Yoga system. He is not born to be a slave, to run hither and thither at the command of nature, but to conquer it. The average human being who does not know the secret of life, is tossed up and down by every circumstance, like a boat without a rudder; but the Yogi rises above these outer conditions. The great system of Yoga is not in the least concerned with teaching men how they may collect a lot of curious information, or how they may acquire some mysterious power by means of which they can control other minds. Its purpose is to teach men how they may control their own minds, may gain a sense of value, a sense of rhythm, a sense of true manhood. The only mind we can legitimately control is our own. We shall find it very difficult to control the mind of another, even that of a two year old child. By controlling our own habits of thought, however, by gathering and directing that force which is going to waste through misunderstanding or misguided zeal, we cannot help but become a great factor in life.

All this that I have given may not appeal to the majority of people, because it contains no element of mystery. Why should I want to mystify them in regard to a subject that is already crowned with mystery? Our purpose should be to simplify things which seem dark, confused or hidden. There is the path of life, for instance—we can simplify that, and our work should begin right with our own life, with our own home. It must be cleansed and put in order. How pleasing it is when a home is kept in order,—more than in order—in harmony; everything in its proper place; the color scheme soothing, harmonious, inspiring! I want to give you this picture because it is also the picture of one who has learned the art of living. Such a person puts ev-

everything in his life where it belongs; there is no wastefulness, and not only that, if there is any interruption from outside he knows how to retire within himself and find there a sense of rest and repose. That is the great art, the great science, and Yoga teaches it.

The Yogis give the illustration of the turtle, or the tortoise, as they call it. It is symbolic of self-control. If you hit it with a hammer, it gathers all its limbs inside. No matter how much you may strike it you cannot make it come out and resist you. Same way it is with a human being who has gained mastery. Once he has entered his inner being, there is nothing from outside that can hurt him or destroy his harmony. He has found the secret of life. He knows that this body, no matter how much care we give it, will wither if severed from its Source; this mind, no matter how clever and well trained it may be, is bound to be weak and faltering, to make mistakes, unless it is in connection with the cosmic Mind. In fact, the whole purpose of Yoga is to keep body, mind, the entire being in perfect tune, in perfect connection with its Source.

Why should this seem unnatural, mysterious or dangerous? There is a class of people who have the notion that the ideas contained in Yoga are very dangerous, and there is another class who will run after it just because of the name and the idea of mystery connected with it. Both of these are unbalanced states of mind. God has given us rationalism; He has given us a sense of value, and it is just that sense of value which Yoga teaches. Again and again you have heard me say that it teaches the rhythm of life. Also it teaches a sense of proportion. Through this balancing of life, which is union with our cosmic Source, we learn all these things in right propor-

tion and in mighty rhythm. Even a small, struggling, insignificant person at once lifts up his head, and all his burdens roll off when he realizes that he has something great in the background of his life. Man grows stronger as he becomes united with that Source, and it is through Yoga that we learn consciously to find our union with it. We never find it accidentally. We have to cultivate certain thoughts, certain rhythm and harmony, not only sometimes but at all times. One who has learned the rhythm of life and always moves in rhythm, in his life there is no wastefulness.

A Sanskrit text from the Upanishads gives this simple definition of Yoga: That which teaches us skilfulness in thought and in action. Thought and action are inseparable. Whenever we learn the art of doing things in direct line, avoiding all useless motion and all waste, that is skilfulness. Therein the whole secret of life is contained. When the mind is focussed, when the interest is focussed, when the entire being has learned to be homogeneous,—hands, feet, mind, brain and aspiration,—then is man united with himself, and being united with himself he cannot be disunited from anything.

Thus the work begins in ourself. Whenever there is any trouble, physical or mental, we can know that we have within us the means by which we can correct it. We may sometimes receive a little outer help, a little upliftment from some one else, or even from nature; that is possible, but the final working out is in the individual life. When this is accomplished consciously and systematically and with a sense of wisdom, then what we gain becomes a permanent asset. In the midst of poverty and sickness, sorrow and difficulty, we have something which is invulnerable, something which no one can buy, which nothing can take away from us.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

The infinite power of the Spirit brought to bear upon matter evolves material development, made to act upon thought, evolves intellectuality, and made to act upon Itself makes of man a god. Manifest the Divinity within you and everything will be harmoniously arranged around it.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

To kill one's fellow-creatures needs no great genius; but to calm a tempest by prudence and judgment is a worthy achievement indeed.—*Erasmus*.

If a man holds himself dear, let him watch himself carefully; the truth guards him who guards himself.

—*Dhammapada*

One who is devoted to Yoga, of purified mind, self-subjugated and a master of the senses, realizes his Self as the Self of all beings; though acting he is not tainted.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*

This is an excellent foppery of the world: that when we are sick in fortune—often the surfeit of our own behaviour—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon and stars; as if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion.—*Shakespeare*

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.—*Proverbs*

The man who has daily inured himself to habits of concentrated attention, energetic volition and self-denial in unnecessary things, will stand like a tower when everything rocks around him, and when his softer fellow-mortals are winnowed like chaff in the blast.—*William James*

The mind which is free from the bondage of passions is a citadel.—*Marcus Aurelius*

PRACTISING LIFE*By Joseph Lhevinne*

(One of the world's most famous living pianists)

By intensive study and with a properly focussed aim, anything within the realm of possibility may be accomplished. Of that I am sure, and I am equally sure that not one of us ever attains his birth-right, because we are mentally lazy when it comes to training the will. We don't mind spending an hour every day in some gymnasium to put our muscles in prime condition, but who ever heard of a mental gymnasium? It is so much easier to wish than to will. I became interested in the possibilities of this power we possess but use so little, after an experience on one of my tours. A few hours before the concert a tooth started to jump and broadcast pain. I could not find a dentist at that hour, so determined to play anyway. I said to myself: Just imagine you like it, and enjoy the sensation. And strange to say, as the concert progressed, the pain seemed to subside. Possibly it was the music, nevertheless the incident led me to study this great force and I found it just a method of practising life as one practises the piano—putting aside a certain portion of the day for thinking practice.

Thus, in time, one acquires the habit of concentration, reasoning, self-perception and self-control. Trembling nerves respond the speediest to this regime. You will soon find that you mind yourself, which really means that you are your will and that your mind is only the servant who takes orders. The sub-conscious mind is one of the greatest factors in life and we use it the least.

By all means use sometimes to be alone. Salute thyself; see what thy soul doth wear.—*George Herbert*

LONE WANDERER

By Swami Paramananda

Lone wanderer, rest thy feet—
There is no need of haste.
Refresh thy tired spirit
In the cool shade of surrender.
Do not strain nor run in feverish haste:
He is not far.
Miss Him not through haste,
Nor blur thine eyes through strain.

THE TREE OF VISION

From the Yoga Vasishtha Maharamayana

Vasishtha said:—Hear me now relate to you concerning the tree of *Samadhi* (supreme vision) which grows in the forest of holy people and is ever loaded with luxuriant foliage, flowers and luscious fruit. It is the soul's regret at the world which is the seed of *Samadhi*, and it grows of itself in the soil of the contrite heart of the wise. It is the duty of the well-taught man, after the sprouting forth of the seed, to preserve it always with the assistance of his two consorts—contentment and cheerfulness. He should then keep the vultures of desire and cupidity from darting upon and picking up the seed. The dust of vanity is to be swept away by gentle acts of piety, and the shades of ignorance are to be dispelled by the ineffable light of the sun of reason.

The tree of Godliness being nourished with the moisture of unworldliness attains its full height in the course of time. This tree shoots forth luxuriant branches of wisdom which stretch far and wide with their fresh verdure. These are the branches of frankness and truth, of constancy and firmness, of equanimity and unchangeableness, of calmness

and friendliness, of kindness, self-respect and renown. It spreads an awning shade of harmony; it stretches a quiet composure over the mind, just as an extensive cloud over-spreads a still calm in the air. As the harbour of discrimination grows higher and higher day by day, it stretches a continuity of cooling shade over the hearts of men.

The deer-like mind, being tired with its wanderings in the desert of the world, finds its rest and refuge under this cool shade, just as a weary traveller, harassed from his very birth in his journey among men, comes to take his rest at last. The silent sage who is full of divine grace attains to a state of ineffable felicity such as the tired wanderer finds in sweet sleep after the turmoil of the busy world. Forsaking all his thoughts and desires he becomes free as the open air and sky. The soul which is liberated from its desires comes of itself into the possession of endless bliss by being dissolved in the Source of bliss, by means of meditation. It becomes conscious of holy light in itself; it loses the sense of its meditation and is wholly lost in that light, as a drop of clarified butter offered in sacred oblation, is burnt away in the sacrificial fire. Let the wise resort to and rest in that place where all meet in one self-shining unity. To the right understanding, the whole world with all its living beings appears as one with one's self; but men of dull understanding bear no mutual sympathy to one another. The knowledge of twain tends to difference and disunion betwixt man and man, but that of oneness leads men to fellow-feeling and union. Thus the tree of meditation produces of itself the fruit of knowledge.

God-vision is not far from him in whom love hath manifested its glories.—*Sri Ramakrishna*

POET-PREACHERS OF PERSIA

By Sister Daya

II

OMAR KHAYYAM

(Literal translation of quatrains, by E. H. Whinfield.
This article of the series will be concluded in the
June number of the "Message".)

It is often the case with new movements struggling against prejudice and fanaticism for their very being, that their first apostles are more dynamic than mild, more denunciatory than gentle. They strike with sledge-hammer blows and with fierce scorn against opposing walls of ignorance, bigotry and hypocrisy, carving a way, as it were, for the more serene prophets who are to follow. Thus it was that Omar—thorn in the side of orthodoxy, scourge of smug respectability—became a voice in the wilderness for the Sufis. Many will deny this. "What!" they will cry, "Omar,—singer of love and wine, cynic philosopher, scorner of God,—to be classed as a religious enthusiast, a seeker for divine vision?" They will hold up the Rubaiyat which for so long, especially in the West, has been the skeptic's Bible, as incontrovertible proof to the contrary. It may come as a surprise to these to know that among the Persians Omar is generally looked upon as a mystic poet.

We of the West do not know the real Omar at all—in so far as his real self is revealed through his writings—most of us know only his partial reincarnation in the beautiful but misleading translation of Edward Fitzgerald. The Rubaiyat, as we are familiar with it, is far from being an exact rendition of the original. Put side by side with a literal translation it is hard to trace the source of some of the quatrains. Many lines were added by the translator, and the very verses which reveal the secret of Omar's faith were omitted. Every man sees only what is within

himself and can reveal only that. So it was that Fitzgerald colored Omar's verses with the hue of his own mind and simply failed to see anything beyond. The average reader of the original text would feel that Fitzgerald was amply justified in his interpretation. He was. But a more mystic reading is equally justifiable. The quatrains themselves are so contradictory, and so at variance is the sensuous, surface philosophy which they proclaim with what is known of Omar's life, that none dares dogmatize. It is with this recognition that the views of the present article are put forward. In a case where there is no solution and where scholars are as much at sea as laymen, any one can form his own conjectures without seeming presumptuous. Also, when it comes to spiritual experience the earnest seeker for practical realization, however humble he may be, can read its signs in the lives and words of others better, perhaps, than can a mere scholar or intellectual for whom mysticism is only a theory. We should remember that to gain an insight into Omar's mind we must take into account his environment—the influences physical, religious and spiritual beating upon him—as well as the current mode of expression of his times.

He was a native of Khorassan, the richest, most powerful and most cultured province of Persia. Nishapur, its foremost city, was his place of residence, and,—if we can accept negative testimony,—his place of birth. At least there is no authentic word to the contrary. He was simply accepted as a Nishapuri. Let it stand, then, that "somewhere amid the enchanted rose-gardens of Nishapur", as one chronicler puts it, "towards the beginning of the eleventh century of the Christian era, was born Ghiyas Uddin Abul Fath Omar Ibn Ibrahim al-Khayyami, the astronomer-poet of Persia." As to his family, contemporary evidence

is mute. We can infer that his father possessed adequate means, for he was able to send his son to be taught by Imam Mowaffik, the head of the foremost college or school of Nishapur, and a teacher renowned throughout the East. The fact that Omar could obtain admission into such an exclusive circle of learning bespeaks his cultural standing. His family name Khayyam or al-Khayyami, meaning "tent-maker", is not found among the Persians; but among the Arabs the name is fairly common. Early in the ninth or tenth century an Arab tribe known as *al-Khayyamīs* was said to have existed and it is more reasonable to assume that Omar was a descendant of some fugitive member of this tribe than that he or his father were actual tent-makers.

Our first real glimpse of him is afforded us in the last will and testament of Nizam-ul-Mulk, Vizier to the Sultan Alp Arslan. This will is in the nature of an autobiography and among other things records a rather remarkable bond entered into by Nizam-ul-Mulk and his two bosom friends at Imam Mowaffik's school—Hassan Ibn Sabbah and Omar al-Khayyami. According to this bond whoever of the three outstripped the others in life's race was to do all in his power for the advancement of his two friends even to the extent of sharing with them his wealth and honors. Now it happened that Nizam-ul-Mulk rose swiftly to a preeminent position which he filled with great dignity. Omar, in the meantime, had been quietly prosecuting his mathematical and astronomical studies, apparently under some financial pressure, for we find him appealing to Nizam-ul-Mulk for a fulfillment of the bond. At once his old friend offered him a high official post, which, however, not being to the liking of the quiet and studiously inclined Omar, was replaced by a government annuity of

1200 gold pieces. This lifted from Omar's shoulders the material burden of things and left him free to develop his scientific and poetic genius unharrassed. By his life he repaid a thousand times over his indebtedness to his government.

Quite otherwise with the third friend Hassan. He likewise appealed to Nizam-ul-Mulk and was likewise given an important government position which, however, he used treacherously to further his own ends. Faced with exposure and punishment, he joined the sect of the Ismaillis and became the founder of the terrible brotherhood of Hassaniyehs or Assassins, through whose agency Nizam-ul-Mulk ultimately perished. Omar's former friendship with this despicable character was often used against him by his enemies. For Omar's long life of over a hundred years was a constant struggle against the forces of orthodoxy. Mohammedanism had gained such a strangle-hold on the people and on the government that it was dangerous to voice an unorthodox opinion, even in private. A close friend might well be a spy in the employ of the authorities. What safeguarded Omar from actual official interference was the tremendous eminence he attained as a scientist, and the protection afforded him by some of the greatest in the land, such as the Sultan Malik Shah the Seljuk who gave him much money to buy astronomical instruments and who used to invite him to sit beside him on the throne whenever Omar came to court.

Among the more ignorant masses he was regarded as a great astrologer and possibly somewhat feared. An ancient Persian manuscript records an instance of his prowess in this connection. The King sent a message to Omar, commanding him to choose auspicious days for a hunting expedition inasmuch as there should be no unfavorable

weather. Omar gave the matter careful attention. The day was selected, the king started forth, when suddenly the sky became overcast and rain threatened. "All present fell to laughing", reads the manuscript, "and the king desired to turn back. But Khaja Imam (Omar) said: 'Have no anxiety, for this very hour the clouds will clear away, and during these five days there will not be a drop of moisture.' So the king rode on and the clouds opened and during these five days there was no moisture, and no one saw a cloud." But the Chronicler had his own ideas about astrology, for he adds "Prognostication by the stars, though a recognized art, is not to be relied on and whatever an astrologer predicts he must leave to fate". Omar seems to have shared this opinion, for one of his quatrains reads:

"The stars who dwell on heaven's exalted stage
Baffle the wise diviners of our age.
Take heed, hold fast the rope of mother wit.
These augurs all distrust their own presage."

Omar's reputation as a scholar, however, did not rest on any such flimsy foundation as augury. He was first and foremost a mathematician and astronomer. At the command of Malik Shah, he, along with six others, reformed the existing calendar. The result, according to Gibbon, surpassed the Julian and approached the accuracy of the Gregorian style. He was also a physician of no mean skill, and, what counted most in Mohammedan eyes, a distinguished expounder of the Koran. Al Ghazali, the great Arabian philosopher, paid high tribute to Omar in this connection. They met more than once during Al Ghazali's visits to Nishapur and often exchanged opinions concerning obscure verses in the Scriptures. The *Nuzhat ul Arwah*, written two hundred years later, describes one of these encounters:

"One day Omar Khayyam, going to see the Vizier Abdul Rezak, he found there Imam Abdul Hassan al Ghazali, chief of the Readers of the Koran. The Vizier and the learned Imam were discussing certain disputed readings of various passages in the Sacred Book, when Omar entering, the Vizier greeted him with the exclamation, 'Behold the expert,' and appealed to him for his opinion. Omar then enumerated the versions of a great number of Readers, all of which he criticized unfavourably, and finished by quoting at length the only one with whom he agreed. Then said Al Ghazali, 'May God add such men to the number of the learned. Verily I do not believe any of the Readers could have remembered so many, not to speak of the philosophers.' "

This knowledge of Omar's—so essential for a scholar of Islam,— was not an unmixed blessing, however. Although it undoubtedly added weight to his utterances, it likewise marked him out in his heresies and helped draw down upon him the bitter enmity of the Orthodox world. His continuous travels for many years have been attributed to religious persecution rather than to a desire to extend his knowledge of men and affairs. Travelling was too difficult and too costly in those days to be undertaken without cogent reasons. Omar, always the student, sought retirement rather than the life of courts, and silence rather than discussion. It is recorded of him that he ever avoided argument. Fearless as he was, he had to hold his tongue and, in writing, to veil his real thoughts to a great extent for his very life's sake. In an effort to appear to fulfill orthodox requirements it was said that he even undertook a pilgrimage to Mecca. In "The Book of the Learned Men", a thirteenth century document written by Ibn al Kifti, we find this portrait of him. Coming as it does, from an unfriend-

ly hand, the testimony it gives as to his life and learning is the more valuable.

"Omar al-Khayyami, Imam of Khorassan, was the most learned man of his day. Not only was he versed in all the wisdom of the Greeks, but he encouraged the search after the One and preached the elevation and purification of the soul through abstinence from the things of the flesh. He also taught the necessity of studying science according to the principles of the Greeks. The later Sufis have professed to find in his verses confirmation of their own doctrines, and have discussed them both in private and at public meetings. But their inner meanings are as stinging serpents to the Mussulman law, hence the men of his day hated him and exposed the secrets he fain would have concealed, so that, fearing for his life, he controlled his tongue and pen. He performed pilgrimages not from piety but from fear, and thus one of his evil secrets was revealed. . . . There was no equal to him in astronomy and philosophy; in these his name was proverb. Oh, that he might have escaped the wrath of God!"

A story is told of a Doctor of Law of Nishapur who used to come secretly at dawn to be instructed of Omar in philosophy, but who during the day, would denounce him as a heretic. Hearing of this, Omar summoned numerous drummers and trumpeters to his place. When the Doctor of Law came as usual, he bade them beat their drums and sound their trumpets. Naturally people came running from all directions. When a sufficient crowd had collected, Omar rose and addressed them, saying: "Men of Nishapur, behold your man of learning! Every morning at this hour he comes to me to be instructed in philosophy, then he goes his way among you and speaks evil words concerning me. If I am what he says I am, why does he come to me to be

instructed, and if I am not, why, then, does he speak evil of his teacher?" This is an illustration of the type of persecution Omar was called upon to endure.

(To be continued)

THE BUDDHA'S PITY

Translated by Arthur Waley

(From the "Upasaka Sila Sutra." Translated into Chinese from the Sanskrit in A. D. 428 by the Central Indian monk Dharmaraksha)

My children,

The Enlightened One, because He saw mankind
drowning in the great sea of birth, death and
sorrow, and longed to save them,

For this was moved to pity.

Because He saw the men of the world straying in
false paths, and none to guide them,

For this He was moved to pity. . .

Because He saw them afraid of birth, old age and
death, yet still pursuing the works that lead
to birth, old age and death,

For this He was moved to pity.

Because He saw them consumed by the fires of
pain and sorrow, yet knowing not where to
seek the still waters of *Samadhi*,

For this He was moved to pity.

Because He saw them living in an evil time, sub-
jected to tyrannous kings and suffering many
ills, yet heedlessly following after pleasure,

For this He was moved to pity. . .

Because many born at the time of His incarnation
had heard Him preach the Holy Law, yet
could not receive it,

For this He was moved to pity.

THE INNER TREASURE

By William Law

(English Mystic, 17th Century)

Consider the treasure thou hast within thee: the Saviour of the world, the eternal Word of God lies hid in thee as a spark of the divine nature which is to overcome sin and death and hell within thee and generate the life of heaven again in thy soul. Turn to thy heart and thy heart will find its Saviour, its God, within itself. Thou seest, hearest and feelest nothing of God, because thou seekest for Him abroad with thine outward eyes; thou seekest for Him in books, in controversies, in the church and outward exercises; but there thou wilt not find Him till thou hast first found Him in thy heart. Seek for Him in thy heart and thou wilt never seek in vain; for there He dwelleth, there is the seat of His Light and Holy Spirit.

For this turning to the Light and Spirit of God within thee is thine only true turning unto God; there is no other way of finding Him but in that place where He dwelleth in thee. For though God be everywhere present, yet He is only present to thee in the deepest and most central part of thy soul. Thy natural senses cannot possess God or unite thee to Him; nay, thine inward faculties of understanding, will and memory can only reach after God, but cannot be the place of His habitation in thee. But there is a root or depth in thee from whence all these faculties come forth as lines from a center, or as branches from the body of a tree. This depth is called the center, the fund, or bottom of the soul. This depth is the unity, the eternity, I had almost said the infinity of thy soul, for it is so infinite that nothing can satisfy it or give it any rest but the Infinity of God.

A GREETING

(A letter from "M", the author of "The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna", to a Western woman devotee visiting in India.)

Many thanks for your kind and affectionate note. To me it was a voice from the far West singing forth the marvels that are being wrought by the Name of our beloved Master and Lord. Here, I could not help being convinced, was another soul who had, through His Grace, realized "the one thing needful, the good part that shall not be taken away, the Divine Love that passeth all understanding".

It is the Lord who has led you to India, the Land of realization, the Land of the Rishis or seers of God, the Land of the renunciation of all sense-enjoyments, the Land where *Niskama-Karma* (desireless work) has been preached from time immemorial, the Land of avatars, the Land of communion with the Infinite and the Eternal, the Land where God has repeatedly shown His wonderful love for His own and His anxiety to protect them, much as the hen protects her chickens with her wings.

Your kind visit to this home has been an inspiration to us,—to us who have been times without number taught by the Good Master to look upon woman, not only as a ministering angel at the time of trial and tribulation, but as a veritable manifestation of the Mother of the Universe, as another form of the Mother Divine. . .

We are very happy to learn that you spent some pleasant hours at the Temple of Dakshineswara, the blessed Shrine where the Master communed with the Mother without ceasing, realized Her Presence, talked to Her, and revealed Her and Her Life-giving Immortal words to His beloved disciples! May He shower His choicest blessings upon you and all other *Bhaktas* (devotees) of the far-off land of your birth is our constant prayer to Him.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AT DELHI

Report by Swami Adyananda

A special invitation was sent to Swami Paramananda by the citizens of the Imperial City of Delhi to attend there the Birthday celebration of Sri Ramakrishna. The Swami, accepting, left for Delhi on the evening of the 24th of February, accompanied by another Swami from the Math (monastery). Arriving the morning of the 26th, they were received at the station by a large crowd and taken to Raisina, a quarter in the new extension of Delhi, where accommodations had been arranged for them. In the evening the Swami was visited by a group of local gentlemen who gathered round him in conversation for over an hour. Some lines of his poems were read and were much appreciated. The next morning began the real celebration, which continued for two days. On the first day's program the Swami spoke in the morning. At noon there were functions in connection with the celebration of the Birthday. In the afternoon at four o'clock a public meeting was held with a gathering of about two thousand people, under a durbar tent set up specially for the occasion. For over an hour the Swami addressed this audience on "The Universal Aspect of Religion and its Relation to Practical Life."

The next day held a very full schedule. The morning began with *kirtanam* (holy singing) and reading of Sanskrit verses. The Swami held an informal meeting, inviting questions from the audience. One gentleman rose and asked, "Can you, a *sannyasin*, a holy man, prove to me that your life of religion is better than mine without any religion?" In reply the Swami said, "I deny any claim of superiority of my life over that of any other." And added: "Religious temperament and tendencies are inborn in man, so it is impossible for one to say that he is not religious."

This man, as well as others, brought up some very practical questions, all of which the Swami answered satisfactorily. At noon about 700 *daridra Narayanas* (God in the form of the poor) were sumptuously fed.

In the afternoon was the main event of the day,—a meeting which drew a concourse of about four thousand ladies and gentlemen, among them many prominent leaders of India who were in Delhi attending the Council sittings. The proceedings began with the election of the Swami Paramananda to the Presidential chair. Mr. S. M. Bannerji, who holds a very high position in the government of India Service, introduced the Swami; he said: "The Swami's personality appeared so attractive to me that I urged him to be my guest at Delhi." After briefly describing the Swami's career in the West he paid a very high tribute to him for his simplicity, sincerity and love, saying, "I do not know whether the Swami is a saint; but his childlike simplicity has so much appealed to me that if simplicity is a qualification for saintliness, I boldly declare that he is, in my opinion, one of the greatest saints I have ever met."

The next speaker was Mrs. Sorojini Naidu, the famous Indian Nationalist, President of the last Indian National Congress, and also one of the best Indian poets writing in English. Following this lady, the Swami Adyananda, who accompanied the Swami Paramananda to Delhi, spoke in Bengali for the benefit of the ladies present who did not know English. Swami Paramananda followed. Rising from the Presidential Chair, the Swami confessed that he was no orator and that if the audience had come expecting high-flown speech from him they would be utterly disappointed. "Dealing with the life of Sri Ramakrishna", said the Swami, "we find simplicity and sincerity as the most fundamental and essential factors of religion." This was

the main purport of the Swami's speech. Thus the program very happily closed. The lectures given by the Swami on these two days having created a deep interest in the minds of those who heard them.

On Tuesday, March 2nd, the students and members of the teaching class of the Ramjas College (under Delhi University) invited the Swami to speak for them. He took as his subject, "Man-making Education" and spoke for over an hour, also reading some of his poems. The lecture made a great impression on the students, and at their request the Swami presented the College library with a complete set of his works. Later he went to the Bengali Club of Delhi where the members had arranged a reception for him and the presentation of an Address of Welcome. The Swami spoke there about two hours on his experiences in America and the West.

Sunday evening the Swami lectured on the "Significance of Sri Ramakrishna's Life", Mr. B. C. Pal, a very famous leader of the Indian National Movement, presiding. The next morning the Swami received visitors, a large number desiring to see him, as he was to leave Delhi that night. In the evening an open-air meeting was arranged in one of the public parks, where an Address of Welcome, written in very appreciative and devotional language by the residents of the Imperial City of Delhi, and printed on a beautiful piece of silk cloth, was presented to the Swami. The Swami, replying to the Address, spoke on *Sevadharma*, (Religion of Service). He spoke in English, his lecture being immediately translated by another gentleman into the local language. About two thousand people attended this meeting, among them being many prominent leaders of the different provinces of India. The Swami left for Calcutta that same night.

REPORT

The Easter-tide was, as usual, the culmination of spring activities at both the Boston and the California Vedanta Centres. Ananda-Ashrama seemed flower-decked for the occasion, for at this season it is veritably "Nature's Sanctuary", as Swami Paramananda has described it—"Shining with living radiance of beauty, sacred by its own virtue". A sunrise Service Easter morning seems inevitable in such an environment, especially as it has become a custom of the Californians. Several guests spent Saturday night at the Ashrama Community-House in order to be up betimes in the morning, and as early as five o'clock motors began to arrive. The Service was held, as last year, on the terrace in front of the Cloister, overlooking far-stretching valleys. The altar was ethereal with its burden of lovely flowers, crowned by a garlanded cross at the centre of which was the Word, the Aum, in Sanskrit. The music was in rhythm with the hour and the setting,—voices and violin blending with the early call of the birds. Clouds hung low, however, and the air was chill. Yet in spite of this there was a joyous gathering of people, some of whom remained for the morning and afternoon Services at 11 a. m. and 3:30 p. m. These were both well attended, although the rain began falling at breakfast time and kept up throughout the day.

One little incident during the second morning Service, made a happy impression on all who witnessed it. As the congregation sat in the Assembly Room of the Community-House, looking out through the many windows, suddenly a deer appeared and stood outlined on a ridge about two hundred yards away. It seemed symbolic of Ananda-Ashrama. Truly a spirit of peace was abroad—a spirit of fellowship, of universality, and of life that is ever new!

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Message of the East



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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tryndall

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POWER OF INWARDNESS

Class Lecture by Swami Paramananda



IN the Bhagavad-Gita, Sri Krishna, the Lord says: "With these eyes of thine thou canst not see Me, therefore I give thee divine sight." Divine sight means inward gazing. We can never see truly without turning our mind within, and yet that is one of the last things we try to do. In our life, and life's experience we seem to think, feel and seek outwardly. When we have trouble, we look without,—we go to people and to places to find the remedy, not realizing that all our disturbances come from outer contact. This is very pronounced to-day in our modern life. We depend upon outer things to such an extent that if we are left alone, we feel desolate, lonely, helpless. What does it indicate? That we are growing more and more resourceless. Instead of feeling helpless and desolate, we should welcome that time of quiet, as giving us opportunity for inward gazing, for making our contact within, and instead of trying to find some diversion to kill time, we should be thankful that God has ordained a time for us to be with ourself.

The gift of inward gazing is far greater than all the riches we possess. What it unveils—what it gives to the individual can never be fathomed until we ourselves have entered that inner sanctuary. Then every part of our life

becomes filled with the radiance of light; there is no more uncertainty, no more indecision or wandering in darkness, no more possibility left for stumbling, because all is revealed by that light. That is why the wise man always first seeks to adjust his inner life, his spiritual being. And what is the result? His outer life becomes rhythmic and free from accident. There cannot be any accident in his thought or his action. It is through the inner that we govern the outer. Even science is coming to this philosophy. Therefore, we should make that the determining factor and realize that the Kingdom of Heaven is within.

If the inner life is impeded, nothing will fill the outer. Many accept this, they understand it intellectually, but they fear that this point of view will be detrimental to their material interest. When our intellectual and spiritual faculties are well organized and balanced, however, it is not likely that we shall suffer in the physical. A man to reach his highest efficiency must have this balancing. Sometimes when we are absent-minded, we think that we are becoming spiritual. It is not so. It is overpowering lethargy. People who are quickened spiritually do not forget anything. True spirituality means practical wisdom. In order to make ourselves fit for the higher place in spiritual life, we must make ourselves fit for the lower place. Here lies the danger. People take dullness for serenity, but these two are different as can be. We are bored by a dull person; we are rested by one who is calm and serene. One is full of light, the other of darkness.

The light must come from within. That is where spiritual life begins. Why is it that one person radiates a certain quality so that everything he touches blossoms with fruition and another person fails no matter what he does? You may say it is fate or that it is predestined. These are

only expressions. There is a definite reason for it. There are people whose minds are so scattered that they cannot move a step without dropping things and breaking them. This is an attitude of mind. They say, "excuse me" and again do the same thing. There is no reason for us to scatter our energies in this way and misrepresent ourselves. When we think that we are backward, inefficient or unsuccessful, we are misrepresenting ourselves. There is no need for it. As soon as we begin the ordering of our faculties, we find that the whole life becomes ordered, transfigured.

We are so overburdened. Our rooms are crowded, our whole life is crowded with things and we do not know how to utilize them. It is not possessions that benefit us. "What profits a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" There must be an inner ordering. It is not that we should make such radical change that we are indifferent to our outer life and possessions; what we need is readjustment and this we must work out in a practical way. Spiritual unfoldment does not mean that we have an easier or more contented life in the sense of an uneventful life; but it means that no matter what comes, no matter what the emergency, we have such deepening of understanding that nothing really matters. Thus a painful thing ceases to be painful. Elation, if it comes, does not have an unsettling influence upon us. We view life with different eyes. The spiritual life in its purest form, in its highest and best, is the living form. It becomes living in you and you become living through it. It is not enough merely to say, "Kingdom of Heaven is within," we must find it. When it is found it changes the whole tone of our life. A noisy person becomes quiet, a scattered person becomes poised, an idle person becomes quickened. It can transform human society.

There would be no calamities if every individual took time for going within. Often people who are overpowered by trying conditions want to be alone. How often we hear it said: "I wish I could be alone." We can either make opportunities for this, or through our mental attitude make it impossible. What does being alone mean? It means finding our own being, finding a point of contact with that divine inner resourcefulness. No one can do his best work till he has learned this. Until the individual life finds its point of contact with that inmost resource it cannot accomplish its utmost. This is a fact.

There can be no real expression of inspiration till we have wiped out self-consciousness. We must give our whole concentration. That is the great secret. Sometimes we see a genius coming out with some tremendous expression. We may think it is just chance. It is never a matter of chance. What we show in the outer life, either of success or failure, of beauty or ugliness, is the result of what we have evolved from within. We are responsible for it. We are preparing all the time for our blessings and for our misfortunes. The whole thing is determined by whether our thought, our attitude, our interest are incoming or outgoing. Through our outgoing tendencies we are not only made personally unhappy, but we see so much of evil and disorder in the world.

There is God's world and man's world. In man's world there is confusion. We do not know whom to trust because everything seems fluctuating and changing. If we fix our whole interest on the external, then we see nothing but this confusion and there is little possibility for bringing about any ordered state of mind. That is why we need to develop the ingoing tendency. There must be a foundation for our life, a very definite place where we can retire and

find our guidance. Every one of us can approach that Source, just like a child, with guileless simplicity. We should never shut our door against those aspects of life which quicken our inner faculties. A man cannot continue to live solely in outer life without breaking himself.

People often ask me the secret of health. The only secret I know is, "do not be filled with yourself." There must be other things to think of than your physical body, your desires, your appetites. Do not saturate your whole being with self. It is the cause of all our suffering and sorrow. There would be no war, no difficulties, no unhappiness in human families if people thought less of themselves. It is not by thinking of ourself that we save ourself; it is by means of inner unfoldment. As our mind goes deeper within, our attitude becomes poised and in our actions there is greater dignity. Also we are less inclined to be affected by outer happenings. A person who lives on the outside magnifies things. He thinks that people look on him with evil intent. We can magnify evil to such an extent that our life becomes a tremendous burden to us. We find no peace even in a jungle. We must learn to conquer this. It is an interesting thing in life that we cannot conceive anything other than our standard. The height where we stand determines the vision. One cannot stand on a low level and see beyond that level. We have to raise ourselves to a greater height to extend our vision.

You may say, we have no time for all this. Make time. For unless we work out these principles as they are related to our life, we are never going to find any peace or comfort. The secret of right action is to learn to do the greatest amount in the least time, and that comes from the inner faculties. We must cultivate the inner life. Every one wants happiness, helpfulness and peaceful mind; but

these things cannot be bought in the market, though there are those who advertise that they will give cosmic consciousness for so much, and some people believe them. Inner consciousness,—inner light—is something we must evolve. Take no chance; carry a light with you. If you are grovelling in the mire and some one says, “there is danger in the dark, carry this lantern,” do you think it impractical? Then why when a spiritual teacher comes and tells you, “walk in the light, keep this light burning,” do you think that is impractical?

What is this light? The light of love—the light of wisdom. “Love will conquer all your ills” is practical philosophy, but one must live it. What kind of love? That is something we must evolve in our own soul. This whole universe is made out of love, sustained by love. Often what we call hate is another aspect of love, misrepresented. Self-love leads to hatred, selfless love leads to love. When love is the opposing factor then other things vanish. Just like darkness and light. Philosophers use this simile. When we bring the light, the dark cannot live. We do not need to fight darkness, all we have to do is to keep a light burning. Love is the greatest factor. We cannot afford to be without God’s love. We must keep an easy access open to that light, that love. People who surround themselves with gentleness of love have a far greater armour about them than anything else they can have. We make ourselves so invulnerable through understanding spirit that no matter what comes, no matter how we are misunderstood, it cannot react upon us.

When we draw within, nothing can touch us; we find such wonderful peace, such shelter within. This is the mark of distinction between the wise and the foolish. Gautama Buddha says: “Find that innermost within, where no

storms can reach," a place where nothing can mar our peace. A man who has found this, he does not lack anything. It is not a question of fancy or imagination. As we strive to contact it, our deepening consciousness will prove to us that the Kingdom within is not a theological statement, but a very real thing. Whatever leads us to it, that helps us to regain it, to realize it, is the greatest asset we can have. This is something we cannot afford to put aside.

We must find our contact with our Source. It is the way we replenish our life. When our life is disconnected from the Source, from the inner Kingdom, it is depleted. We should take no chance with our spiritual being. Life is never safe for us, unless we walk in the light. When a man has kindled his inward light and life, he not only has a blessing that is sufficing for himself, he brings light and comfort to others. For he who carries the Light of God, radiates it. He becomes a true child of Divinity.

I have never had any revelations through anaesthetics, but a kind of waking trance—this for the lack of a better word—I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has come upon me through repeating my own name to myself, silently, till all at once, as it were, out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away in boundless being, and this not a confused state but the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words—when death was an almost laughable impossibility—the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction but the only true life. I am ashamed of my feeble description. Have I not said, the state is beyond words.

—*Tennyson*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Mencius said to the disciple Kaou, "There are the foot-paths along the hills; if suddenly they be used, they become roads; and if, as suddenly, they are not used, the wild grass fills them up. Now the wild grass fills up your mind."—*Chinese Teaching*.

What do you find within, O soul, my Brother?

What do you find within?

I find great quiet where no noises come.

Without, the world's din:

Silence in my home.—*Evelyn Underhill*

Passion is overcome only by him who has won through stillness of Spirit the perfect vision.—*Santi Deva*

Make the counsel of thy heart to stand; there is none more faithful unto thee than it. For a man's soul is sometime won to bring him tidings, more than seven watchmen that sit on high on a watch-tower.—

—*Wisdom of the Apocrypha*

He who is in the fire, and He who is in the heart, and He who is in the sun, they are one and the same. He who knows this becomes one with the One. . . The shrine which consists of the ether in the heart, the blissful, the highest retreat, that is our own, that is our goal, and that is the heat and brightness of the fire and the sun.

—*Maitrayana-Brahmana-Upanishad*

On earth we die. In heaven we die. In the highest heaven we die. It is only when we reach God that we attain life and become immortal.—*Swami Vivekananda*

Two things fill the mind with ever-increasing awe and admiration: the star-lit heavens above, and the Moral Law within.—*Kant*.

BLESSED COUNSELS

By Friar Giles

(A Spiritual Son of St. Francis of Assisi)

In humility the mind rests and reposes; patience is her daughter; holy purity of heart sees God, but true devotion tastes Him. If thou lovest, thou wilt be loved. If thou servest, thou wilt be served. If thou fearest, thou wilt be feared. If thou shalt do good unto others, it is fitting that others do good to thee. But blessed is he who truly loves and desires not to be loved. Blessed is he who serves and desires not to be served. Blessed is he who fears and desires not to be feared. Blessed is he who does good to others and desires not that others do good to him. But inasmuch as these things are very high and of great perfection, therefore the foolish can neither know nor attain them.

Three things are exceeding high and very profitable, and they who have acquired the same shall never be able to fall. The first is if thou bear willingly and with joy every tribulation which befalleth thee for the love of Jesus Christ. The second is if thou humble thyself every day in everything that thou dost and in everything that thou seest. The third is that thou faithfully love that highest good, celestial, invisible, with all thy heart; the which no man is able to behold with the eyes of the body. Those things which are most despised and reviled by worldly men are of a truth most acceptable and most welcome to God and to His saints and those things which are most loved and most honored and most pleasing to worldly men are those which are most despised and reviled by God and by His saints. This foul contradiction proceedeth from human ignorance and human wickedness; for wretched man loveth rather those things which he ought to hate, and hateth those things which he ought to love.

Once Friar Giles asked another friar, saying: "Tell me, most dear brother, hast thou a good soul?" The friar made answer: "This I do not know." Then Friar Giles said: "My brother, I would have thee know that holy penitence, and holy humility, and holy charity and holy devotion, and holy joy make the soul good and blessed.

PURIFY THE MIND

From Conversations of Swami Turiyananda

"Do not ruffle the mind. Control the mind, be not controlled by it. Surrender yourself to Him alone, your everything,—your body, mind and soul." Thus said the Swami to one who sat before him and then sang: " 'O my Mind-bird, why fly from tree to tree tasting different fruits? Make thy eternal nest on One Who can offer thee the greatest fruit.' To transcend the mind is fully to manifest the intellect. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that the pure mind and the pure Self are one. The mind gets purified as soon as its worldly character is destroyed. A pure mind is that which, fully believing in the unity of Self, sees the same *Atman* (Supreme Self) in all and deals with them accordingly. In the Gita and the Upanishads you will find that words meaning 'steady' and 'well-balanced' are repeatedly used. Such a state happens when the mind has become pure. If you succeed in purifying the mind, everything is set right. The pure-minded have things pre-arranged for them in the external world.

"One must keep out attachment. All the trouble is due to love being centred on specific objects. When you dive into the Ganges you don't feel any weight, although there are tons of water overhead. But one feels so burdened when one places a cask of water on one's head! Even the spine may give way. You may love all the beings in the

world and not be at all under bondage, but the moment you allow your love to be centred on any special object, you are bound. If you can get rid of these loads, then only you can attain to peace and liberation. Constant discrimination sharpens the intellect. Truth surrenders itself to a man who is always discriminating to attain it. There is a gulf of difference between compassion and attachment. A *sadhu* (holy man) must have compassion and not attachment—the idea of ‘me’ and ‘mine’—for that is the root of all bondage. Look to the *Atman*, not to the body. Practise to have the mind ever fixed on the *Atman*. ‘One gets attached to objects by constantly thinking of them. From attachment comes longing, and from longing anger.’ Anger is a concentrated form of lust. It makes one lose one’s head completely. Lust does not so absolutely overwhelm the mind. Never think of transient things. That way you can escape attachment.

“Even saints may slip and become bound. Self-exertion is what is needed to snap through bondage. It is self-exertion that brings about quick results; otherwise there is no knowing when the success will come. It is in the human body that the gates to emancipation open. So every man should be on his guard and make a good use of his life. Enjoyment that one is after is possible in other bodies also, but emancipation is not. What we know we must bring into practice at least once. Sri Ramakrishna practised everything three times. Through practice new knowledge comes. Do something—practise! Bondage and freedom are both in the mind. *Atman* is beyond mind. Try to live with those who have mastered the mind. If you cannot live with them, think of them. Mind controls mind. The mind can be concentrated in many ways, through meditation, singing, reading, etc. Always watch your mind. Be the

master of senses and mind. There is a place even in this body where the mind being pitched, one can be perfectly at ease. What is required is a change of the angle of vision. No escape from trials and difficulties by flying from them."

Towards evening a party of pilgrims came to see the Swami. One of the men remarked that meditation is dangerous without a *Gura* (teacher). The Swami did not agree with him. "*Pranayama* (breath control) is dangerous without proper instruction," he said, "but not meditation. In the sixth chapter of the Gita you will find instructions for meditation. When the mind gets concentrated, the breath also becomes even. He who realizes the Lord within, finds Him without too. One can explain a thing if only one has a clear grasp of it, which is the outcome of concentration. Better still is meditation. At Srinagar I used to meditate on the Upanishads. It was a charming occupation. In this way eight Upanishads stuck in my memory. What is meditation but great absorption in a subject? By concentrating on a subject, its inner secrets come out of themselves. First you have to prepare the mind. After that, any subject to which you may apply it, will stand explained. The method of controlling the mind is by seriously watching it for some length of time. It can be done both by love and by discipline, according to circumstances. The mind should be under your control—it must not be allowed to ride on you, for then the tables will be turned.

"Whatever one has the least attachment for, gives the mind a loop-hole to direct you as it pleases. You become a slave to it, which is not the case if you are unattached. Lust, attachment and the like are one and the same thing, varying only in intensity. One must turn the mind away before it gets attached to any object. Otherwise it is an

impossible task. 'Through whatever reason, the restless, unsteady mind wanders away, let him, curbing it from that, bring it under the subjugation of Self alone.' With unflagging perseverance the mind must be again and again brought back to the *Atman*. It is the nature of mind to be fickle and restless, like a naughty child that has to be pulled back by the ear to its studies. Of course repeated and incessant efforts are necessary, but at last the mind will come under your control and remain calmly fixed on the *Atman*. Then you realize the Self as pervading everything. You find that He alone exists, nothing else. And that is called the state of Transcendental Consciousness."

SPIRIT OF GOD

By Sir Thomas Browne

There may be, for ought I know, an universal and common Spirit to the whole world. It was the opinion of Plato, and it is yet of the Hermetical philosophers. If there be a common nature that unites and ties the scattered and divided individuals into one species why may there not be one that unites them all? However I am sure there is a common Spirit that plays within us, yet makes no part of us; and that is, the Spirit of God, the fire and scintillation of that noble and mighty Essence. . . . This is that gentle heat that brooded on the waters and in six days hatched the world. This is that irradiation that dispells the mists of hell, the clouds of horror, fear, sorrow, despair; and preserves the region of the mind in serenity. Whosoever feels not the warm gale and gentle ventilation of this Spirit, though I feel his pulse, I dare not say he lives; for truly, without this, to me there is no heat under the tropic, nor any light, though I dwelt in the body of the sun.

DESERT-NIGHT*By Swami Paramananda*

This star-strewn canopy o'erhead,
Covering vast expanse of space,
Alluring our gaze to limitless vision—
The play of light and shade,
Seen and unseen,
The strange and mysterious drama of life,
 enacted in unspoken words,
Make us dumb with wonder,
And our mind still with unfathomed thoughts.
Our soul cries out in dumb ecstasy:
O wonder of wonders!
O beauty of creation!
O boundless life!
I, a part of Thee,
And Thou, my origin!

HOURS OF THE SOUL*By Walt Whitman**The Night*

I am convinced there are hours of Nature, especially of the atmosphere mornings and evenings, addressed to the soul. Night transcends for that purpose, what the proudest day can do. Now, indeed, if never before, the heavens declared the glory of God. It was to the full sky of the Bible, of Arabia, of the prophets, and of the oldest poems. There in abstraction and stillness . . . the copiousness, the removedness, vitality, loose-clear-crowdedness of that stellar concave spreading overhead, softly absorbed into me, rising so free, interminably high, stretching east, west, north, south—and I, though but a point in the centre below, embodying all.

As if for the first time, indeed, creation noiselessly sank into and through me its placid and untellable lesson, beyond—O, so infinitely beyond!—anything from art, books, sermons, or from science, old or new. The spirit's hour—religion's hour—the visible suggestion of God in space and time—now once definitely indicated, if never again. The untold pointed at—the heavens all paved with it. The Milky Way, as if some superhuman symphony, some ode of universal vagueness, disdaining syllable and sound—a flashing glance of Deity addressed to the soul. All silently—the indescribable night and stars—far off and silently.

The Dawn

This morning between one and two hours before sunrise, a spectacle wrought on the same background, yet of quite different beauty and meaning. The moon well up in the heavens, and past her half, is shining brightly—the air and sky of that cynical-clear, Minerva-like quality, virgin cool—not the weight of sentiment or mystery, or passion's ecstasy indefinable—not the religious sense, the varied All, distilled and sublimated into one, of the night just described. Every star now clear-cut, showing for just what it is, there in the colorless ether. The character of the heralded morning, ineffably sweet and fresh and limpid, but for the esthetic sense alone, and for purity without sentiment. I have itemized the night—but dare I attempt the cloudless dawn? (What subtle tie is this between one's soul and the break of day? Alike, and yet no two nights or morning shows ever exactly alike.) Preceded by an immense star, almost unearthly in its effusion of white splendor, with two or three long, unequal spoke-rays of diamond radiance, shedding down through the fresh morning air below—an hour of this, and then the sunrise.

The East

What a subject for a poem! Indeed, where else a more pregnant, more splendid one? Where one more idealistic-real, more subtle, more sensuous-delicate? The East, answering all lands, all ages, peoples; touching all senses, here, immediate, now—and yet so indescribably far off—such retrospect! The East—long-stretching—so losing itself—the orient, the gardens of Asia, the womb of history and song—forth issuing all those strange, dim cavalcades. . . Always the East—old how incalculably old! And yet here the same—ours yet, fresh as a rose, to every morning, every life, to-day—and always will be.

POET-PREACHERS OF PERSIA*By Sister Daya***III****OMAR KHAYYAM**

(Literal translation of quatrains, by E. H. Whinfield)

Fortunately for Omar, he was blessed with an abiding, if somewhat ironic, sense of humor which must have done much to lighten for him the weary weight of life. One delightful anecdote reveals this. It tells of a donkey with a load of bricks, which refused to enter the courtyard of a seminary where Omar was seated with his pupils. After watching the futile attempts of the workmen to get the stubborn little beast to move, Omar, smiling gently, approached the donkey and repeated some verses to him, at which he pricked up his ears and started along. On being questioned, Omar, probably very gravely, replied: "The soul of this donkey at one time occupied the body of a former teacher in this seminary and he refused to enter until he found he met with recognition on the part of his equals," which to the serious-minded means that Omar

believed in the possibility of a man becoming a donkey, or, to put it philosophically, that he held to the transmigration of souls.

As a matter of fact, Omar did not dogmatize concerning any belief. Like all great philosophers, he looked existence squarely in the face, but made no claim to possessing a key to the enigma. Never for one moment, is he a skeptic, however. Never for one moment does he question the existence of one infinite inscrutable Being. We may be helpless pawns upon the checker-board of life, but there is always the great Player. We may be balls hither and thrither driven, but He who drives us on, "He knows, He knows!" It was this unshakable belief of his in the Absolute One who moulds men's lives as a potter moulds his clay, which made of Omar a fatalist, a rebel and a worshipper; likewise it caused him to be unwaveringly humble with the basic humility of the wise.

"My critics call me a philosopher,
But Allah knows full well they greatly err;
I know not even what I am, much less
Why on this earth I am a sojourner.

The world will last long after Khayyam's fame
Has passed away, yea, and his very name.
Aforetime we were not, and none did heed,
When we are dead and gone 'twill be the same.

Who was it that did mix my clay? Not I.
Who spun my web of silk and wool? Not I.
Who wrote upon my forehead all my good,
And all my evil deeds? In truth not I."

If, as the Upanishads say, "He who thinks he knows It, knows It not, and he who thinks he knows It not, knows It," then Omar must have been close to final knowledge.

"What eye can pierce the veil of
God's decrees,
Or read the riddle of earth's destinies?
Pondered have I for years three score and ten,
But still am baffled by these mysteries."

Or as he puts it in another great poem of his: "The Wisdom of the Supreme":

"The world is Thine, by Thee it rose,
By Thee it ebbs, by Thee it flows.
Hence worldly lore! By whom is wisdom shown?
The Eternal knows, knows all, and He alone."

Thus on one side of being Omar faced a Power, infinite and absolute; on the other side, a universe, living, sentient, endless as God, yet impermanent as a cloud,—a universe whose very atoms seemed to bleed with the agony of change. This twin concept formed the background of his life and philosophy. It plays through every line of his poems.

"The joyous souls who quaff potations deep,
The saints who in the mosques sad vigils keep,
Are lost at sea alike, and find no shore,
One only wakes, all others are asleep."

This human life which seems so real to us is but of the fabric of dreams: *Maya*, illusion,—nothingness!

"You see the world, but all you see is naught,
And all you say, and all you hear is naught,
Naught the four quarters of the mighty earth,
The secrets treasured in your chambers, naught."

For all is naught save One; no self exists save One; nor "you," nor "he," nor "I" exist, but only One. Yet "you," and "I", and "he" trapped in this fleeting dream, tricked by this seeming real, what shall we do?

"O live this present moment which is thine,
Seek not a morrow, mourn not yesterday!"

cries Omar. The present—that vanishing-point between the future and the past—is all we have. And what if it should be our vanishing-point into Infinitude?

"Drink wine! and then as Mahmud thou wilt reign,
And hear a music passing David's strain:
Think not of past or future, seize to-day,
Then all thy life will not be lived in vain."

Peace! the eternal "has been" and "to be"
Pass man's experience and man's theory;
In joyful seasons naught can vie with wine,
To all these riddles wine supplies the key.

What time my cup in hand, its draughts I drain,
And with rapt heart unconsciousness attain,
Behold what wondrous miracles are wrought—
Songs flow as water from my burning brain."

The question now arises: was this wine of which Omar sings the actual juice of the grape? Was this joy which Omar vaunts, the bitter-sweet, ever-fleeting joy of the senses; or did he mean Something far deeper, Something which these symbolized,—a draught from an eternal cup,—divine intoxication which is never-ending bliss? Love and wine, these have ever been the accepted symbols of mystic experience, why then should Omar not use them as such, compelled as he was to hide his real heart? Did he mean to hide it from all, or did he write merely for those who had eyes to read, as in this quatrain?

"When false dawn streaks the east with cold grey line,
Pour in your cups the pure blood of the wine;
The truth, they say, tastes bitter in the mouth,
This is a token that 'the Truth' is wine."

It may be that Omar does not always use it in that sense, however.

The Rubaiyat has been called a mirror of passing moods. It is more than that. It is the summing up of a life's experience written we are led to think when that life had nearly reached its term, for in one verse, at least, Omar refers to having touched the century mark. Its quatrains are a record of his reactions to those two great, fundamental facts of which we have spoken: the allness of the One, the nothingness of the many, and, in addition, to the poignant, human facts of joy and pain, of ignorance and cruelty, of laughter, love and death. The Rubaiyat is the

voice of a noble soul, torn with pity for the helplessness of men, filled with fiery scorn for what is false and harsh and dissonant in men—for vice concealed by men beneath the cloak of cant, hypocrisy and pride. Thus it is that in open defiance of “those hypocrites who build on saintly show,” he sings sometimes of human, sensual love, of actual wine, of joys forbidden by the Mussulman law on earth, but promised good Mohammedans as their reward in Paradise:

“In Paradise, they tell us, Houris dwell
And fountains run with wine and oxymel:
If these be lawful in the world to come,
Surely 'tis right to love them here as well.”

Ah, how this soul abhorred hypocrisy! Let the world, if it would, think him profligate! Better that than play the saint. There is One who knows, One whom no sham can trick.

“The heavenly Sage, whose wit exceeds compare,
Counteth each vein, and numbereth every hair;
Men you may cheat by hypocritic arts,
But how cheat Him to whom all hearts are bare?”

For Omar there was a greater sin than drunkenness. It was lack of love, lack of feeling for one's fellow-man.

“Blame not the drunkards, you who wine eschew,
Had I but grace, I would abstain like you,
And mark me, vaunting zealot, you commit
A hundredfold worse sins than drunkards do.

Hear now Khayyam's advice and bear in mind,
Consort with revelers though they be maligned,
Cast down the gates of abstinence and prayer,
Yea, drink and even rob, but oh! be kind!

Whate'er thou doest, never grieve thy brother,
Nor kindle fumes of wrath his peace to smother;
Dost thou desire to taste eternal bliss,
Vex thine own heart, but never vex another.”

Omar's was a living creed, if creed it can be called, a creed of kindliness, of love and of overwhelming pity. Because of this pity he sadly, often cynically, arraigns the Author of the drama, yet, at the next moment cries:

"O Thou! who knowest the secret thoughts of all,
In time of sorest need who aidest all,
Grant me repentance and accept my plea,
O Thou who dost accept the pleas of all."

This deeper note sounds over and over again, a note of passionate yearning for that One whom he proclaims as both the Spectator and the Spectacle.

"My body's life and strength proceed from Thee!
My soul within and Spirit are of Thee!
My being is of Thee and Thou art mine
And I am Thine, since I am lost in Thee!

Although the creeds number some seventy-three
I hold with none but that of loving Thee;
What matter faith, unfaith, obedience, sin?
Thou'rt all we need, the rest is vanity."

Is this the faith of a sensualist? Could he who scorns even the joys of heaven find solace in a wine cup? He sought not heaven but the One, and having visioned that One all else seemed chaff.

"In synagogue and cloister, mosque and school,
Hell's terrors and heaven's lures men's bosoms rule,
But they who master Allah's mysteries,
Sow not this empty chaff their hearts to fool.

Some hanker after that vain fantasy
Of Houris feigned in Paradise to be,
But when the veil is lifted they will find
How far they are from Thee, how far from Thee."

No! Omar's vision of the Ultimate never wavers. Though he may rebel, though he may deride, though he may fling his sensuous lines in the face of all the schools and even in the face of God, he holds fast to that faith. In his own words, "One as two he ne'er misreads," therefore he never despairs of grace.

Whoever thinks that such a mind could evolve a cheap, licentious philosophy, only measures his own depth. True, life with its beauty and its pain filled Omar's heart to the brim. True, for him there was more reality in a drunkard deep in wine, in the intoxication of human love than in a

harsh and sterile piety; but renunciation it was that gave him the power to feel and the vision to see. He was a poet, and his poetic soul thrilled to the poignant loveliness of ever-dying things, yet in line after line he reveals that his true life was a stripping clean of self, of everything save God.

"O heart! when on the Loved One's sweets you feed,
You lose yourself, but find yourself indeed;
And when you drink of His entrancing cup
You hasten your escape from quick and dead.

Think not I am existent of myself
Or walk this blood-stained pathway of myself;
This being is not I, it is of Him.
Pray what and where and whence is this 'myself'?

O Lord! from self-conceit deliver me,
Sever from self and occupy with Thee!
This self is captive to earth's good and ill,
Make me beside myself and set me free!"

Does it take much vision to see that within the cup of the quatrains was dissolved a pearl of great price?

"Soon shall I go, by time and fate deplored,
Of all my precious pearls not one is bored;
Alas! there die with me a thousand truths
To which these fools fit audience ne'er accord.

In drinking thus it is not my design
To riot or transgress the law divine,
No! to attain unconsciousness of self
Is the sole cause I drink me drunk with wine.

The more I die to self, I live the more,
The more abase myself, the higher soar;
And strange! the more I drink of Being's wine
More sane I grow and sober than before.

Man is a cup, his soul the wine therein,
Flesh is a pipe, Spirit the voice within;
O Khayyam have you fathomed what man is?
A magic lantern with a light therein."

Only when all thoughts of sense and self fall away in divine ecstasy does man attain his true being. This is *Samadhi*, this is *Nirvana*, this is union with the Divine; but the path to it is narrow and few there be who enter thereat.

"If you have sense, true senselessness attain,
And the Etern Cupbearer's goblet drain.
If not, true senselessness is not for you—
Not every fool true senselessness can gain."

If by the term "wine" Omar means merely the juice of the grape, then the following quatrain is not clear; but if divine communion is meant, then its import becomes plain:

"All night in deep bewilderment I fret,
With tear-drops big as pearls my breast is wet;
How can I fill my cranium with wine,
How can it hold wine, when 'tis thus upset?"

The disturbed mind has no trouble in holding wine; but it cannot hold God—it cannot commune with Him. Are not these the words of one who has left theory behind and is entering into a world of ever deepening realization, a world that cannot be too openly proclaimed? More than once Omar touches upon this need for concealment.

"There is a mystery I know full well,
Which to all, good and bad, I cannot tell;
My words are dark, but I cannot unfold
The secrets of the 'station' where I dwell.

To knaves Thy secret we must not confide,
To comprehend it is to fools denied,
See then to what hard case Thou doomest men:
Our hopes from one and all perforce we hide."

So rich is the Rubaiyat in these verses which reveal the deep mystic intent of Omar, that it is a pity they cannot all be given here. Some are clearly outspoken, others are full of subtle implication as in the following, touching upon the "Truth", a Sufi term for God:

"The 'Truth' will not be shown to lofty thought,
Nor yet with lavished gold may it be bought;
But if you yield your life for fifty years,
From words to 'states' you may perchance be brought."

That is, from words or theories to actual states of being, what else? At-one-ment with Deity and nothing less was what this poet craved. He was old and weary, it is true, this often is revealed in his lines; but deeper than the cry

for rest was the cry for release from the never-ending round of existence.

"I never would have come had I been asked,
I would as lief not go, if I were asked,
And to be short, I would annihilate
All coming, being, going were I asked!"

Do we not hear in this an echo of the prayer that rises from every Hindu heart: "O Thou Eternal One, deliver us from the endless round of births and deaths!" Everything must have its end, good and ill, joy and pain, heaven and hell, therefore why seek peace in the changing?

"Suppose the world goes well with you, what then?
When life's last page is read and turned, what then?
Suppose you have a hundred years of bliss,
Yea, and a hundred years besides, what then?"

In the face of this evanescence what should be our attitude? Omar tells us:

"Souls that are well informed of this world's state,
Its weal and woe with equal mind await:
For be it weal we meet or be it woe
The weal doth pass, and woe too hath its date."

and he adds this bit of practical advice for the long-faced:

You know all secrets of this earthly sphere,
Why then remain a prey to empty fear?
You cannot bend things to your will, but yet
Cheer up for the few moments you are here."

Can one imagine such a soul deliberately attaching himself to the things of the senses?

No Hindu could express the *Sannyasin* ideal of complete renunciation more emphatically than Omar, when he says:

"If you seek Him abandon child and wife,
Arise! and sever all these ties to life;
All these are bonds to check you on your course,
Arise and cut these bonds as with a knife!"

And finally, lest men misinterpret the love that he praises, he writes:

"This worldly love of yours is counterfeit,
And like a half-spent blaze lacks light and heat,
True love is his, who for days, months and years
Rests not, nor sleeps, nor craves for drink or meat.

My true condition I may thus explain
In two short verses which the whole contain;
From love to Thee I now lay down my life
In hope Thy love will raise me up again."

In that love, after a century of living, Omar Khayyam "veiled his countenance in the dust" and was buried in a spot where the trees shed their blossoms on him twice a year, thus fulfilling a prophecy he himself had made at the city of Balkh, a prophecy which seemed at the time impossible of fulfillment because of Mohammedan burial customs. One of his pupils writes: "His tomb lay at the foot of a garden wall, over which pear trees and peach trees thrust their heads, and on his grave had fallen many flowers. Then I remembered that saying in the city of Balkh, and I fell to weeping, because on the face of the earth and in all the regions of the habitable world, I nowhere saw one like unto him. May God (blessed and exalted as is He) have mercy upon him by His grace and favour."

A philosopher turns his back upon illusion, but a poet sees through it as through a veil and beholds eternal beauty. Because of Omar, love, birds, blossoms, dawn, the very dust, are filled with wonder. This poet by his vision of the One makes even the jug within our hands seem living, and this little life of ours he calls "a breath blown from vasty deeps" to seem no other than the Breath of God. Brave, unflinching soul! May his comings and goings find their term at last in those great deeps; may his heart's prayer be answered: "O Thou, who out of nothing didst create all things, uplift me from this nothingness to Thine own glory."

(To be continued)

REPORT**BOSTON**

On April 21st, the Vedanta Centre of Boston gave a reception to the Hindu Students' Association, at the Centre's new home, 176 Marlboro Street. There were about eighty present, students and their friends,—young people of various races and traditions who exchanged song, story and experiences in a spirit of international camaraderie. At the close refreshments were served. It was a happy evening for all and none went home without feeling richer for this wider contact.

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

Ananda-Ashrama has steadily carried forward the work of development during Swami Paramananda's absence in India. The new Community House is gradually evolving a garden,—pergolas, lawns and stone walls having taken the place of builders' debris, to the surprise and delight of Sunday visitors who each week see a decided change. It is through the loyal and devoted labour of consecrated workers that these changes are being brought about, not to mention other things, essential to the maintenance and development of an extensive property like the Ashrama. Only those who saw it at the beginning can appreciate all that has been accomplished by tireless effort, during these past three years.

INDIA

From India there has been little detailed news as to Swami Paramananda's activities. Through letters we learn of the wonderful reception given him at Dacca, his home district, where friends of his childhood vied with each other to do him honour. The greatest event, however, of the Swami's sojourn in his Motherland, was the Convention held at the head monastery of the Ramakrishna Mission

at Belur, near Calcutta, when several hundred Swamis from all over India assembled. It was the first time in the history of the Mission that such a gathering had occurred and it brought into close contact the oldest workers and the youngest, direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, as well as the latest members of the Order, all united by the great principles of love, renunciation and service. It was Swami Paramananda's privilege to read before the Convention the Address of Swami Shwananda, venerable President of the Mission, and we take pleasure in giving a few of the closing paragraphs, so that the West may share with the East the spirit of this unusual and holy occasion. After reviewing in a comprehensive way the ideals for the Ramakrishna Mission as laid down by the Swami Vivekananda at its inception, the Presidential Address read as follows:

"Religion is the great mission of India. This is the only gift that we can bestow on the world. From time immemorial religious ideas flowing from this land have been contributing their quota to shape the civilizations of the world. We are still alive in spite of the many vicissitudes that have befallen this unfortunate race during the last ten centuries, only because religion forms the back-bone of our life. With us God is the central pillar round which move all other schemes of life individual or collective. True greatness is estimated here in the scales of spirituality. . . Incarnations and Prophets have come before in numbers to show us light in the midst of darkness, to elevate us from national depression. But darkness of former ages that necessitated the advent of Prophets, compared with the darkness that has overwhelmed us at present, may be said to be light itself.

"Through thousands of years' chiselling and modelling, the lives of the great prophets of yore come down to us;

and yet, in my opinion, not one stands so high in brilliance as that life which I saw with my own eyes, under whose shadow I have lived, at whose feet I have learnt everything. That great personality is behind you. Our forefathers performed great deeds, you must do greater deeds still. Each one of us will have to believe that everyone else in the world has done his work, and the only work remaining to be done to make the world perfect, has to be done by himself. This is the responsibility we have to take upon ourselves. Putting your faith in our Lord, everyone of you can say, 'Let me stand where I am and I shall move the world.'

"I exhort you with all the earnestness at my command not to be disturbed or discouraged by momentary failures. Failures are but the stepping-stones to success. Viewing success and failure alike, work on with unwavering faith and victory will be yours at the end. I only pray that your surrender may be complete. Be like the arrow that darts from the bow. Be like the hammer that falls on the anvil. Be like the sword that pierces its object. The arrow does not murmur if it misses the target. The hammer does not fret if it falls on the wrong place. And the sword does not lament if it is broken in the hands of its wielder. Yet there is a joy in being made, used and broken; and an equal joy in being finally set aside. . . . Let the atmosphere of this Convention vibrate with a spirit of love and benediction. Let us, in conclusion, say with the great Indian sages: 'Sweet blow the winds and the rivers scatter sweetness! May the herbs and trees be full of honeyed sweetness! May night and morning yield us joy! May the dust of the earth be sweet onto us! May father Heaven give us happiness! May the sun shower bliss on us! May the cows yield us all-sweetness! Om Joy! Sweetness! Bliss!' "

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tryndall

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DIVINE MIRACLES

By Swami Paramananda



“VERILY, I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.” Although these words of the Christ are consoling, although they are marked with high spiritual standard, they will not seem practical to the man of the world. How can he believe this? How can he expect a mountain actually to remove? Yet it is very definitely spoken, so definitely that there is no room left for doubt as to its meaning. If such a thing should happen—the moving of a mountain by faith—we would call it a miracle. What is a miracle? If we analyze, not merely with the superficial intellect, but with all the higher rationalism and spiritual qualities we possess, we shall find that the forces we are working with to-day, the forces that are creating their reactions in the world around us, these same forces, when they are directed through higher channels, will bring the opposite fulfillment. Not knowing this, we fail to recognize them and look upon such reactions as supernatural and miraculous.

The Christian Bible, as well as the other Bibles of the

world, are full of miracles. We might discard them as vague and indefinite imaginations of man's mind, but man has never been able to imagine anything other than what has existed somewhere at some time. Man has not such ingenuity that he can create with his imagination something out of nothing. He might enlarge on what is already existing, he might magnify it, but there is always a reason for every imagination, and there are reasons for all miracles. When a man directs his forces through doubt, suspicion, mental calculation and other elements of a similar nature prevalent in his mind, he brings about certain definite conditions as the result of his thoughts, and he looks upon these as physical or natural laws. It is quite natural for us to be sick, and it is quite natural for us to reach old age and die, because we have stamped these facts on our physical and our intellectual life as the accepted course of events. They are the sum total of our current thoughts. Every man and every woman is indulging in this way of thinking and is calling it the natural way; a man must think of his own interest, of his physical welfare and, at most, of the welfare of his immediate family.

Our thoughts are constantly revolving around those things which pertain to the flesh, to bodily life, thus limiting the adjunct of our mind as well as the possibilities of our intellectual and spiritual faculties. As a result of this, all our experiences are centred on the material plane, and because we are meeting them every day and in every turn, we call them the fulfillment of natural laws. If some one comes with a different viewpoint, with a different standard, with different hopes and expectations, and brings about another set of results, we are not able to account for them. We are astonished, we are bewildered,

and we call them miraculous happenings. There is, however, only one law which is operating in life, eternally operating,—the law of the divine Principle. When we learn to understand and to abide by this Principle, we find the natural fulfillment of that great law. For instance, hope, faith, love, spiritual fervour,—whenever a person exhibits these qualities he brings about conditions which seem to be miraculous.

We have very vague and visionary ideas in regard to spiritual principles. There are devout Christians who say that many things were possible in the life of Jesus that are not possible for any one else, because He was divinely appointed. But what made these things possible? Did He not ask every one to bring the same conditions into his own life. "Be ye perfect, therefore, even as your Father which is in Heaven." Did He not warn His disciples and followers again and again, even those few who had the courage and understanding to follow Him, that it is not the one who calls Me, Lord, Lord, Master, Master, by any means who enters into the kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do the will of My Father. No one can ever become spiritual, no one can ever follow a high standard of living and bring betterment into his own life and into the lives of others without following at least some of these principles.

If we establish our interest upon things that are passing and perishable, we must expect perishable experiences in our life. Man believes with his whole fervour in the flesh, in material existence. It has hypnotized him, it has paralyzed his higher sensibilities; therefore, every incident of the flesh seems overwhelming, he cannot rise above it. Sometimes, vaguely and indefinitely, he may quote a sentence from the Bible, or from some great Classic, but he

has not the faith. Do you suppose we can carry anything unless we possess it? If we have that faith, whatever we desire, whatever we command, it will be fulfilled. One man comes and speaks glibly about some theory or idea, and it makes no impression on our mind; another man speaks perhaps of the same thing and at once we want to find out more, because of the fervour, the conviction he puts into it. Then there are souls who speak with such definite feelings that there is no uncertainty left, like the Christ when He said, "If ye have faith even as a grain of mustard seed",—nothing indefinite about it.

What is this? Is it something dependent upon a creed that we must profess and that we must have faith in? No. It means coming in definite contact with certain real facts of life, and if we believe in them because they are based on our experience and vision, then nothing can go wrong in our life. Not only that, but we can bring light instead of darkness into the lives of others. In India we find certain types of people who are so definitely constituted that they would rather hold to the power of faith than to all the glamour of material conditions. They would rather embrace the life of poverty and follow the life of God than possess all the richness which the world can offer. Why? Because they have found a greater richness, a greater strength, and a more enduring life. One of the lessons we have to learn to-day is not to accept or follow a religion merely because we are born into it and cannot escape from it. Religion must become a vibrant, living fact in our life. We must live with it, walk with it; we must learn to know what we are doing, and why we are placed here. As soon as we have found our Father-Mother, the very root of our existence, that Absolute Being, that Word, as the mystics call It, why our strength is increased a

thousandfold. A man may say, "I want this and I want that," but he wants it for his own little happiness, his own little gain, and it does not come to him. Another speaks as did Christ, with that definite feeling, and at once we find his prayer is fulfilled because he has connected himself with a great Immensity.

Where shall we establish our faith? In this little flesh? In this little mind, in this little brain, in the capacity of our little hands? Or shall we place our faith in That which is the Source of our sustenance? According to where we place it, we find the measure of our success in life. We are left altogether free to choose. We are our own masters. We can give ourselves to the Ideal, or we can make ourselves slaves to this world and its events. We can so burden ourselves with life, that we are not even able to take care of our own needs. They overwhelm us and our mind becomes enshrouded with doubt and despondency. Again we rise up with the same consciousness, with the same mind, to a great height. It is not that we have to make a radical change in our life and habits, but we must have a definite grasp on spiritual principles if we would find fulfillment in life, otherwise we meet with disaster.

What others have done we can also do, and never for one moment think that we are asked to choose a vague and visionary path, or that we should simply fold our hands and sit thinking, "I have faith, I am going to move the mountain." It is not the morbid, not the calculating people, not those who are revolving round and round their petty self and its small interests who will ever realize the truth of this teaching, but only those who are fervent, who are active, who have given themselves to big things,—those who have expanded their life and consciousness and

have dared to touch Infinitude. How can we dare to touch It if we are always afraid of stepping out of our little self? We must make our choice. We can either choose the God-path, the path of faith, the path of love, the path which leads to constructive unfoldment, or we can choose the path of greed, of selfishness, of helplessness. We sometimes are helpless in our choice because we have not the power to choose something better. We have not the resolution, the courage, the steadfastness, and thus we fall into a snare of deception and defeat. In this way we bring all the existing conditions into our life.

When a person is under depression, when he is going through a state of confusion, the only way he can come out of it is not by speculation, doubt, suspicion and self-depreciation, but by turning his mind into another channel, by lifting himself to another sphere where he can stand and see what his needs are and how he can escape from the onslaught of circumstances. This means a definite working out, and not just an indefinite way of saying, I believe in this, or I believe in that. Our life must become established in facts. And what is the greatest fact in life? Life itself, the Source of life. It is not enough merely to come into existence and drag ourselves through life saying, "Well, there is nothing else for me to do." Every one of us who is here has been given a definite mission, but we cannot fulfill that mission simply because we have some intellectual training or a little bit of material resourcefulness.

Our greatest resource lies within, and he who finds his access there, his life blossoms forth, and we say, "Here is a man of miracle." He lays his hand upon the sick and destroys all illness; he speaks a word and at once a soul is quickened; he raises men almost from the dead,

and we call it miraculous. But such miracles are all about us. The Supreme One does not want us to be despondent; He does not want us to be doubting and destructive to ourselves and to others. How often He comes and knocks at our very doors and we refuse to wake up and see Him! The Light is right before us and we close our eyes. This means our misfortune.

People who are weighted with the slumber of material consciousness think that they are going to be saved by some miracle. They have the idea that something is going to happen over night to change their destiny. But things do not happen that way, and they never happen to those who are lethargic, unawakened and unprepared. We have to prepare for the great happenings of life, and we do this not through doubt and miscalculation, despondency and hatred, but through our finer qualities. Instead of doubt, we bring faith and hope; instead of hatred, we bring love. It is much easier for the Lord to find His access into that heart which is full of love than into that which is lacking it. There are certain conditions which bring fulfillment. A man closes all the doors and windows of his house, pulls down all the shutters and shades and says, "There is no sunlight." The only way he will have sunlight in his house is to rouse himself and open the doors and windows. Likewise the only way he will have sunlight in his soul is to open the doors and windows of his soul and let the light shine in. It will awaken him, it will bring healing, it will transform his life; his weakness will cease; and the indefinite quality of his mind will vanish, because he will see definitely, and seeing, he will believe. That is the way it is with us. We go begging that some one may perform a miracle and cure us of our ills, when the very remedy for those ills exists within us.

The foundation of real miracle is in man himself. When His disciples came with blind and miserable, how often Christ said: "Do you believe that I can do these things?" We can close the door altogether so that there is no power which can infuse us. We can make ourselves so impenetrable through doubt, through wrong attitude of mind, that no spiritual force can enter within us. Also we have the power to open ourselves, and through that openness of soul comes the great awakening, the blinding power. No one can relate himself to better conditions without bringing a definite force for betterment into this world.

A man of faith, a man of hope, a man of courage, a man of love—he is a walking miracle. He performs miracles in the same manner as spring performs them after winter's devastation. Flowers and shrubs and trees spring forth with new life. Same way it is with our life. Sometimes through misconception we may sit in a corner, feeling that life is not worth living, but if we come in contact with one who has found the key of life, has touched the Essence, it quickens us. How lovely it would be in this world if we had more people with faith in God, faith in Divinity, faith in their own inherent power, people who through their faith, hope, courage and love could quicken the same faculties in others. What greater work can one do in this world? What greater miracle can one perform than to rescue a man who has lost his hold on life and is sinking because he does not know that he already possesses within himself the saving grace.

According to a Hindu parable, there was once a Brahman priest to whom a milk-maid every morning brought a supply of milk. Often she was delayed, however, and one day, the priest, very provoked, said to her: "Why do you come so late?" She replied, "Good Sire, the ferry

boat is not on time and the passengers detain me. But for that I would bring the milk every day with absolute punctuality." "Kind woman", said the priest, "people cross the ocean of life through faith, yet you cannot even cross this little river. Faith is the greatest power; if you only had faith you could cross it." She took this very strongly to heart. All that night she thought of his words, that one who possesses faith can cross the ocean of life and here was only a little river. The next morning she arrived on time with the milk and the morning following. This went on for several days till finally the priest noticed it and asked her: "How is it that you come now every day without fail?" "Did you not tell me," replied the milkmaid, "that with faith one could cross the ocean of life? I relied upon your word and walked across the river." The priest was amazed and thought, surely if a poor, ignorant woman can do this merely through my word, I can do it. So he went with her and as she began to walk on the water, he attempted to follow her, repeating the Name of the Lord, but at the same time carefully guarding his clothes from getting wet. Almost immediately he began to sink and she, seeing this, called to him: "You cannot walk on the water and not have faith, and if you have faith, then you cannot possibly take any precaution."

One who takes this in a superficial way will think it only a visionary story, but it has profound significance. When we have our whole being in our task, when we are not conscious of physical limitations, it is a very great asset; it rouses us from the slumber of doubt and despondency, and lifts us above our connection with the material world. Whenever we fasten our heart and soul to any ideal without any bias, without any division, without any conflict, it creates a tremendous force. Thus we find through-

out history that when a great teacher, a God-embued spirit, lays his hand upon another, upon one who opens his heart with simple faith, that one is redeemed and restored. We cannot analyze these things with the mind because they are not within the realm of the ordinary mind. It is altogether a different realm. We may come very close to it and yet not know we are there. It is what the mystics call the divine realm. The Scriptures say and declare it is the Kingdom within. We all possess this great heritage within us and yet we go on begging; moreover, we grow doubtful not only of God and humanity, but of ourselves. We cannot help but doubt ourselves, humanity and God when we have not the right principle.

If a man enters into this world with calculation and suspicion, he will draw things of that nature to him. He brings disaster upon himself and others, because that is the only reaction such thoughts can create. That one, however, who has fastened his heart and soul and mind to the divine Principle, he cannot touch any part, any life, anything in this world without bringing spiritual fruition. Do not hold these thoughts aloof as something vague and indefinite which in no way concerns you. You are a child of God, but to know it, to abide by it—that is what brings fulfillment. We cannot help but abide by it if we know it. Our inherent divine Principle will never fail to give us sustenance. It is that which transforms our life. But it is not the letter we should cling to. “If ye have faith even as a grain of mustard seed”: we may have that written right before our eyes, yet it will convey nothing unless our life has unfolded those qualities by means of which we become more and more conscious of the Divine.

We all want happiness, we all want health, we all want things that make for our betterment; but we can never find

them so long as we give ourselves to conditions which are changeable, which bring disease, doubt and affliction. Therefore, let us learn little by little to give ourselves to the Unchanging, the Absolute, the Word, deep within us, —not only within us, but without us and all about us. No one can be aware of That without being better, happier and more resourceful. We cannot be conscious of the higher without attaining a higher measure of happiness and power to do things. Through our faith we exalt ourselves, and through lack of it we defeat ourselves. In the world to-day it is quite the fashion not to believe in anything. There are some people who even take pride in being atheists. It is, however, the greatest defeat any man can have, when he is bound so absolutely by the glamour of the material that he fails to find his relationship with the Source of life. It is the empty shell of vanity and sooner or later he finds that he does not know anything.

Every one of us must try to find access into the Source of life. When we have found it, our weakness will cease, our doubts will vanish, and our despondent feelings will not exist any more. In their place we shall have a divine, a perpetual, an abiding happiness in such measure that even those who are sad and downcast will find peace through us, and our very word will cheer them and give them a fresh start. There is nothing so saving, so elevating, so life-giving as a man of faith, a man of love, a man of God, not in theory but in reality. It is this consciousness we must evolve. We are here for that purpose, and when we fail to evolve it, we impoverish ourselves. We may have great material wealth, we may have fine houses and nice clothes and great abundance of food, but they do not suffice. There is a void, an emptiness within. We may not confess it; we may try to hide it and say, "I have

everything;" we may even pretend a smile, but that emptiness is there and it is infectious. It can saturate a whole family.

The only way we can help ourselves and those who depend upon us is by not confining ourselves to this little shell of material life. We must find our expansion. We must make our contact with the Source of our being. We may think that we do not need it, but there is no man, no woman, no living creature who can do with less. Sooner or later every one comes to realize this. Without that great consciousness we are incomplete. With it we are invincible. Through it our power is enlarged, our capacity is magnified, our horizon of happiness so tremendously extended that it seems like a miracle. But it is not miracle, it is the fulfillment of higher laws.

NEW PARABLES OF JESUS

Discovered by Professors Hunt and Grenfell

Jesus saith: Except ye fast to the world ye shall in no wise find the Kingdom of God. . . . I stood in the midst of the world and in the flesh was I seen of them and I found all men drunken and none found I athirst among them and my soul grieveth over the sons of men because they are blind in their heart.

Jesus saith: Wherever there is one alone I am with him. Raise the stone and there thou shalt find me, cleave the wood and there am I.

Jesus saith: Let not him who seeks cease until he finds, and when he finds he shall be astonished; astonished he shall reach the kingdom, and, having reached the kingdom, he shall rest.

Jesus saith: Ye ask who are those that draw us to the kingdom, if the kingdom is in heaven? The fowls of the

air and all the beasts that are under the earth or upon the earth, and the fishes of the sea. These are they which draw you, and the kingdom of heaven is within you; and whoever shall know himself shall find it. Strive, therefore, to know yourselves, and ye shall be aware that ye are the sons of the Almighty Father; and ye shall know that ye are in the city of God and ye are the city.

THE FOURTH PROHIBITION

From the "Gospel of Buddha"

Jotikha, the son of Subhadda, was a householder living in Rajagaha. Having received a precious bowl of sandalwood decorated with jewels, he erected a long pole before his house and put the bowl on its top with this legend: "Should a samana (holy man) take this bowl down without using a ladder or a stick with a hook, or without climbing the pole, but by magic power, he shall receive as reward whatever he desires."

And the people came to the Blessed One, full of wonder and their mouths overflowing with praise, saying: "Great is the Tathagata (the Buddha). His disciples perform miracles. Kassapa, the disciple of Buddha, saw the bowl on Jotikha's pole, and stretching out his hand, he took it down, carrying it away in triumph to the monastery."

When the Blessed One heard what had happened, he went to Kassapa, and, breaking the bowl to pieces, forbade his disciples to perform miracles of any kind.

Soon after this it happened that in one of the rainy seasons many bhikkhus (monks) were staying in the Vajji territory during a famine. And one of the bhikkhus proposed to his brethren that they should praise one another to the householders, saying: "This bhikkhu is a saint; he has seen celestial visions; and that bhikkhu possesses su-

pernatural gifts; he can work miracles." And the villagers said: "It is lucky, very lucky for us, that such saints are spending the rainy season with us." And they gave willingly and abundantly, and the bhikkhus prospered and did not suffer from the famine.

When the Blessed One heard it, he told Ananda to call the bhikkhus together and he asked them: "Tell me, O bhikkhus, when does a bhikkhu cease to be a bhikkhu?"

And Sariputta replied:

"An ordained disciple must not commit any unchaste act. The disciple who commits an unchaste act is no longer a disciple of the Sakyamuni (Buddha).

"Again, an ordained disciple must not take except what has been given him. The disciple who takes, be it so little as a penny's worth, is no longer a disciple of the Sakyamuni.

"And lastly, an ordained disciple must not knowingly and malignantly deprive any harmless creature of life, not even an earth-worm or an ant. The disciple who knowingly and malignantly deprives any harmless creature of its life is no longer a disciple of the Sakyamuni. . . .

And the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus and said:

"There is another great prohibition which I declare to you:

"An ordained disciple must not boast of any superhuman perfection. The disciple who with evil intent and from covetousness boasts of a superhuman perfection, be it celestial visions or miracles, is no longer a disciple of the Sakyamuni.

"I forbid you, O bhikkhus, to employ any spells or suplications for they are useless, since the law of karma governs all things. He who attempts to perform miracles has not understood the doctrine of the Tathagata."

MY NEIGHBOUR AND MYSELF

By C. F. Andrews

(Reprinted From "Modern Review")

When I was quite young I was told by my mother the Golden Rule of life, to "love my God with all my heart and soul and to love my neighbour as myself." She used to impress upon me that this was the whole duty of man and that all the years of my own life would be too long to seek to fulfill it. When I grew older, I used to puzzle over the last part of the Golden Rule, and I had never fully understood it until I came out to India. For I used to ask myself: "How can one love another person only just in the same way that one loves one's own self?" I used to take the phrase "as myself" to mean to love other people like myself; and taking the word in that sense, I could not feel that this was quite strong enough. For instance, my own mother loved me evidently more than she loved herself. Was that extravagant love of my mother for me, her child, wrong? Was it a breach of the Golden Rule? Ought she to draw a line somewhere in the extravagance of her love? Somehow, this idea of limited love used to vex me, and I had an unquiet feeling about this quantitative standpoint of love. But when I came out to India the truth was suddenly revealed to me through the Upanishads, that I did not know truly the meaning of the original passage in my own Scriptures. The true meaning was this: That I should love my neighbour as myself, because he truly was myself. There was, therefore, no mere limited measure of love, no mere likeness between him and me, but identity.

I heard only recently a very beautiful story about the saint, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, how when he had realized this supreme truth of the Advaitam, and wished to carry it out in action, he used to go out at night time and

do the sweepers' work in the neighbouring places, removing the very filthiest things and the most repulsive, in order that he might truly identify himself with the sweeper and not merely talk about unity.

THE DIVINE DARKNESS

By Dionysius the Areopagite

(Unknown Christian Mystic, writing under name of the Areopagite about 500 A. D.)

What is the Divine Darkness?

Triad, Deity above all Essence, Knowledge, and Goodness; Guide of Christians to Divine Wisdom; direct our path to the ultimate summit of Thy Mystical Lore, most incomprehensible, most luminous, and most exalted, where the pure, absolute, and immutable mysteries of theology are veiled in the dazzling obscurity of the Secret Silence, outshining all brilliance with the intensity of their Darkness, and surcharging our blinded intellects with the utterly impalpable and invisible fairness of glories surpassing all beauty.

Let this be my prayer; but do thou, dear Timothy, in the diligent exercise of mystical contemplation, leave behind the senses and the operations of the intellect, and all things sensible and intellectual, and all things in the world of being and non-being, that thou mayest arise, by Unknowing (that is,—realization transcending all finite knowledge) towards the union, as far as is attainable, with Him Who transcends all being and all knowledge. For by the unceasing and absolute renunciation of thyself and of all things, thou mayest be borne on high, through pure and entire self-abnegation, into the superessential Radiance of the Divine Darkness. But these things are not to be

disclosed to the uninitiated, by whom I mean those attached to the objects of human thought, and who believe there is no Superessential Reality beyond, and who imagine that by their own understanding they know Him Who has made Darkness His secret place. . . .

Thus the blessed Bartholomew asserts that the Divine Science is both vast and minute, and that the Gospel is great and broad, yet concise and short; signifying by this, that the Beneficent Cause of all is most eloquent, yet utters few words, or rather is altogether silent, as having neither (human) speech nor (human) understanding, because he is superessentially exalted above created things, and reveals Himself in His naked Truth to those alone who pass beyond all that is pure and impure, and ascend above the topmost altitudes of holy things, and, who leaving behind them all divine light and sound and heavenly utterances, plunge into the Darkness where truly dwells, as the Oracles declare, that ONE Who is beyond all.

. . . The divinest and highest things seen by the eyes or contemplated by the mind are but the symbolical expressions of those that are immediately beneath Him Who is above all. Through these, His incomprehensible Presence is manifested upon those heights of His Holy Places; that then It breaks forth, even from that which is seen and that which sees, and plunges the Mystic into the Darkness of Unknowing, whence all perfection and understanding is excluded, and he is enwrapped in that which is altogether intangible and noumenal, being wholly absorbed in Him Who is beyond all, and is none else (whether himself or another); and through the inactivity of all his reasoning powers is united by his highest faculty to Him Who is wholly unknowable; thus by knowing nothing he knows That which is beyond his knowledge.

The Necessity of being United with and of rendering Praise to Him Who is the Cause of all and above all.

We pray that we may come unto this Darkness which is beyond Light, and, without seeing and without knowing, to see and to know that which is above vision and knowledge through the realization that by not seeing and by unknowing we attain to true vision and knowledge; and thus praise, superessentially, Him Who is Superessential, by the abstraction of the essence of all things; even as those who, carving a statue out of marble, abstract or remove all the surrounding material that hinders the vision which the marble conceals, and, by that abstraction, bring to light the hidden beauty.

It is necessary to distinguish this negative method of abstraction from the positive method of affirmation, in which we deal with the Divine Attributes. For with this latter we begin with the universal and primary, and pass through the intermediate and secondary to the particular and ultimate attributes; but now we ascend from the particular to the universal conceptions, abstracting all attributes in order that, without veil, we may begin to contemplate the Superessential Darkness which is hidden by all the light that is in existing things.

What are the Affirmations and the Negations concerning God?

. . . The higher we soar in contemplation the more limited become our expressions of that which is purely intelligible; even as now, when plunging into the Darkness which is above the intellect, we pass not merely into brevity of speech, but even into absolute Silence, of thoughts as well as of words. Thus, in the former discourse, our contemplations descended from the highest to the lowest, embracing an ever-widening number of conceptions,

which increased at each stage of the descent; but in the present discourse we mount upwards from below to that which is the highest, and, according to the degree of transcendence, so our speech is restrained, until, the entire ascent being accomplished, we become wholly voiceless, inasmuch as we are absorbed in Him Who is totally Ineffable.

But why, you will ask, does the affirmative method begin from the highest attributions, and the negative method with the lowest abstractions. The reason is because, when affirming the subsistence of That which transcends all affirmation, we necessarily start from the attributes most closely related to It and upon which the remaining affirmations depend; but when pursuing the negative method to reach That which is beyond all abstraction, we must begin by applying our negations to things which are most remote from It. For it is not more true to affirm that God is Life and Goodness than that He is air or stone; and must we not deny to Him more emphatically the attributes of inebriation and wrath than the applications of human speech and thought?

That He Who is the Pre-eminent Cause of all things sensibly perceived is not Himself any of those things.

We therefore maintain that the Universal and Transcendent Cause of all these things is neither without being nor without life, nor without reason or intelligence; nor is He a body, nor has He form or shape, or quality, or quantity, or weight; nor has He any localized, visible, or tangible existence; He is not sensible or perceptible; nor is He subject to any disorder or inordination or influenced by any earthly passion; neither is He rendered impotent through the effects of material causes and events; He needs no light; He suffers no change, or

corruption, or division, or privation, or flux; none of these things can either be identified with or attributed unto Him.

Again, ascending yet higher, we maintain, that He is neither Soul nor Intellect; nor has He imagination, opinion, reason, or understanding; nor can He be expressed or conceived, since He is neither number, nor order; nor greatness, nor smallness; nor equality, nor inequality; nor similarity, nor dissimilarity; neither is He standing, nor moving, nor at rest; neither has He power, nor is power, nor is light; neither does He live, nor is He life; neither is He essence, nor eternity, nor time; nor is He subject to intelligible contact; nor is He science, nor truth, nor kingship, nor wisdom; neither one, nor oneness; nor god-head, nor goodness; nor is He spirit according to our understanding, nor Filiation, nor Paternity; nor anything else known to us or to any other beings, of the things that are or the things that are not; neither does anything that is know Him as He is; nor does He know existing things according to existing knowledge; neither can the reason attain to Him, nor name Him, nor know Him; neither is He darkness nor light, nor the false, nor the true; nor can any affirmation or negation be applied to Him, for although we may affirm or deny the things below Him, we can neither affirm nor deny Him, inasmuch as the all-perfect and unique Cause of all things transcends all affirmation, and the simple pre-eminence of His absolute nature is outside of every negation,—free from every limitation and beyond them all.

Ignorance constitutes the only darkness which covers all things and makes them look mysterious. When everything is lighted by Knowledge, the sense of mystery vanishes.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

GOPALA AND THE COWHERD*By Sister Nivedita*

First I must tell you that Gopala had the best mother that ever lived. His father, too, had been a good man. He had not cared about money. All he had wanted was to be good and read the holy books, learning all the beautiful things he could, and teaching them to other people. The village folk regarded him as their learned man, so they gave him a little field in which he could grow corn, and there was a patch of ground near his house which produced fruit and vegetables, and this had always been enough. When he lay dying he said to his wife, "Beloved, I am not very anxious about you and Gopala. I know that our Lord Himself will take care of you. Besides the field will bring you corn, and our kind neighbours will dig the garden for you, that you may have food." And the mother said, "Quite right, my husband. Have no care about us. We shall do well." Thus she cheered him with all her strength, that he might die in peace, fixing all his thought on God. And when all was over, the neighbours came and carried the dead body away. And they put it on a pile of wood, and set lighted straw to it, and it was burned until only a few ashes were left. Then they took the ashes and threw them into the river, and that was the end of Gopala's father.

So now the child and his mother lived all alone in the forest and the only thing she was waiting for was the day when she also could die and rejoin her husband. But she wanted to be quite sure of being allowed to go to him. So she said many many prayers, and bathed three times every day, and tried to be hardworking and good. And the neighbours were indeed kind. Her corn was sown and harvested with that of the village, and they came and helped in the gardening, so that there was always food enough.

By-and-by when Gopala was four or five years old, his mother felt that it was time he went to school. Only before that could happen he must have new clothes, and a little mat to carry under his arm and unroll for a seat at school, and inside the mat a number of palm leaves for a copy book, and a pen box with an ink stand in it, and some reed pens. He would not need a slate just yet, for very little boys have sand strewn over the floor and make their first letters and figures with their fingers in that. I wish you could have seen the new clothes he wanted! Poor little Gopala! India is such a hot country that two long pieces of cotton are all a little boy needs. One, called the chudder, is thrown over the left shoulder like a kind of shawl, and the other, the dhoti, is folded round him below, and fastened in at the waist. I suppose he would want four of these, two for to-day and two for to-morrow, when to-day's suit would be washed in the stream. Of course all these things together cost very little, but to the poor mother it seemed a great deal, and she had to work hard for many days at her spinning-wheel to earn the money.

At last all was ready, and, carefully choosing a lucky day, she blessed her little son, and stood at the cottage door, watching him go down the forest path to his first lessons. As for Gopala, he went on and on. The road seemed very long and he was beginning to wonder if he had lost his way, when at last the village came in sight and he could see numbers of other boys going in to the school. Then he forgot that he had been a little frightened, and hurried up with the others and presented himself in class. It was a long and delightful day. Even when lessons were over, there were games with the other boys, and when at last he set out to go home, it was almost dark. It was a long time before Gopala could forget that first

walk home through the forest alone. It grew darker and darker and he could hear the roar of wild beasts. At last he was so frightened that he did not know what to do, and so he began to run and never stopped till he was in his mother's arms.

Next morning he did not want to go to school. "But", said his mother, "you had such a happy day yesterday, my child, and learnt many beautiful things! You said you loved your lessons. Why do you not wish to go to-day?"

"School is all very well, mother," he replied, "but I am afraid to go alone through the forest."

And then he stood there, so ashamed. But how do you think his mother felt? Oh, such a terrible pain came into her heart, because she was too poor to send any one with him to school. It was only for a minute though, and then she remembered the Lord Krishna. She was one of those who worship Him as a young child, almost a baby, and she had called her own little one after Him, for the word Gopala means "cowherd". So she told her little boy a story. She said, "You know, my child, there lives in these woods another son of mine who is also called Gopala. He herds cows in the forest yonder. He is always somewhere near the path and if you call out to him, 'O, Cowherd Brother, come with me to school!' he will come and take care of you, and then you will not be frightened, will you?"

And Gopala said, "Is it really true that my brother will come and take care of me?"

And his mother said, "Yes, it is true—just as true as it is that you are God's child and that He loves you."

"Good-bye, mother," said Gopala, "I love to go to school."

He set out bravely enough, but a little way down the forest path it was rather dark and he began to feel afraid. He could hear his own heart go pit-a-pat. So he called

out, "O Brother Cowherd, Brother Cowherd, come and play with me!"

The bushes first began to rustle and then parted, and out peeped a boy's head, with a little gold crown on it and a peacock's feather in the crown. Then a big boy jumped out and took the child's hand, and they played all the way to school. But when they came near the village, the young cowherd, telling His little brother to call Him, again on his way home, went back to His cows. There was something so lovely about this boy, He was so full of fun, and yet so kind and gentle and strong that Gopala grew to love Him as he had never loved any one before. And as, day after day, he told his mother all about it, words could not express her gratitude. But she was not in the least surprised. It seemed to her quite natural that the Child Krishna should comfort a mother's heart.

So time went on. And then something happened. The schoolmaster announced that he must give a feast—a wedding party, or something of the kind. Now people in India practically never pay a schoolmaster for keeping a school. It is quite easy for him, all the same, to obtain food. For his field, like the widow's, is part of the village-lot, and the villagers plant and dig for him also. But on a special occasion, such as the present, when it becomes known to his pupils that he must provide a feast, each boy will go home to his parents and say, "My noble teacher"—for so the master is called—"my noble teacher is about to give a party. What gifts can I take to him?" Then some mothers will set to work and cook quantities of sweetmeats, cakes and puddings; some will prepare great trays of fruit; one will buy beautiful silk cloth for him and his wife to wear at time of worship, and others will send cotton and muslin for daily clothing. In this way the school-master

and his wife are amply provided for. And now, like others of course, Gopala said to his mother that night, "Mother, to-morrow is our noble teacher's party. What can I take to him?"

Again her child's words made the poor mother very sad for a moment. She knew that she was not rich enough to give her little boy anything for his master. But it was only a moment, and she brightened up again, for she thought of the Child Krishna and knew that He would help them.

"I cannot give you anything to take to your teacher, but ask your Brother in the forest for something as you go to school in the morning," she said.

So in the morning Gopala and the Shepherd Boy played all the way to school; but just as He was leaving Gopala said to Him, "O Brother, I almost forgot. Will you give me something for my teacher to-day? He is going to have a party."

"What can I give you? What am I but a poor Cowherd? Oh, but I know"—and away He ran for a moment, and came back with a little bowl of sour milk. In India they eat the thick part of sour milk and call it curds. And He said, "That is all I can give you, Gopala. It is only a poor Cowherd's offering. But give it to your teacher." Gopala thought it was a beautiful present, the more so because it came from his woodland friend. So he hastened to the master's house and stood eagerly waiting behind a crowd of boys, all handing over what they had brought. Many and varied were the offerings, and none thought of even noticing the gift of the fatherless child. This neglect was disheartening, and tears stood in the eyes of Gopala, when, by a sudden stroke of fortune, his teacher chanced to look at him. He took the tiny pot of curds from his hands,

and went to empty it into a larger vessel, but, to his wonder the pot filled up again. Again he poured, again the little pot was full. And so he went on, while it filled faster than he could empty it. Then the master gave them all curds to eat, and went on pouring and pouring. Still the little cup was full. Every one said, "What does this mean?" And Gopala, as much astonished as the rest, understood for the first time who His Brother in the forest was. Never till this moment had he even guessed that the Child Krishna Himself had come to play with him. So when the master turned to him with the question, "Where did you get this curd?" it was very reverently that he answered, "I got it in the forest from my Brother, the Cowherd."

"Who is He?"

"One who comes and plays with me on my way to school," said Gopala. "He wears a crown on His head, with a peacock feather in it, and carries a flute in His hand. When I reach school He goes back and tends His cows, and when I am going home He comes again to play with me."

"Can you show me your Brother in the forest?"

"If you come, Sir, I can call."

So hand in hand the master and Gopala went along the path together. At the usual place the child called, "Cowherd Brother! Brother Cowherd! Won't you come?" But no voice answered. Gopala did not know what to do, and he saw a look of doubt on his teacher's face, so he cried once more, "O Brother Cowherd, if you do not come they will think I do not tell the truth!"

Then came a voice, as if from far away in the forest, "Nay, little one, I cannot show My face. Thy master still has long to wait. Few sons indeed are blest with mothers like to thine!"

REPORT

Nothing conveys the illusory nature of human life more than does the element of time. Thus the many months of Swami Paramananda's absence seemed to melt away completely as he stood on the station platform at Glendale, surrounded by friends eager to welcome him back to America and the West. It was as if he had never been away. Accompanying him from the Orient was Swami Akhilananda who is to assist him in his work, and Swami Dayananda who remained behind in San Francisco as assistant to Swami Prakashananda.

The following day, June 20th, being Sunday, a large number assembled at Ananda-Ashrama to attend the Services, expressing in this way their joy at the Swami's return. On Tuesday an impromptu reception at the Ashrama Community-House gave the Swami opportunity to greet his friends in a more informal way and to present to them Swami Akhilananda who expressed his appreciation of the warm welcome accorded him, in sincere, earnest words which immediately won sympathetic response. All were eager to hear about the trip to India and looked with interest at photographs, Addresses of Welcome and other souvenirs which were arranged on a long table for inspection.

Although the Swami, weary from his voyagings, would gladly have remained uninterruptedly at the Ashrama for some months, the call of faithful hearts at Boston, Cincinnati and elsewhere, as well as certain insistent duties, drew him east on June 29th. He is gone, however, only for a few weeks, it is hoped, and expects to be back in California before the first of August. During his absence Services and Classes at the Ashrama will be conducted by Swami Akhilananda and Sister Daya.

BOOK REVIEWS

Superconscious Vision.—By Swami Prabhavananda.

(Published by The Vedanta Society of Portland. Price 20 cts.)

This extremely lucid booklet follows logically the Swami's first pamphlet, "Subconscious Mind and Its Control", which was reviewed in the April number of the "Message". It defines with admirable clarity the various fields of human consciousness and leads the reader to the inevitable conclusion that the one goal worthy of the seeking is that supreme state transcending the limitations of the ego, where we are born again into the life of Spirit, the one, universal Self. The Swami covers many points in a very few pages, doing away with all sense of confusion by his clear, simple and one-pointed presentation of certain great, fundamental facts. Whoever reads this pamphlet will have clearly defined in his mind the difference between subconscious and superconscious, and will lay it aside with a sense of mental and spiritual refreshment.

Pessimism and Life's Ideal.—By Kamakhya Nath Mitra, M. A.

This profound and erudite paper from the hand of one who is the principal of the Rajendra College, Faridpur, Bengal, is put forth both as a statement of the Hindu outlook and as a challenge. With clear-eyed vision Professor Mitra looks upon the world and meets fearlessly the Western accusation that the Orient is pessimistic in its philosophic and religious tendencies. This Prof. Mitra does not deny but proceeds to point out the difference between the scientific pessimism of the West "which holds out no hope to mortals" and the philosophic pessimism the logical outcome of which is complete renunciation and final liberation or moksha,—the pessimism of the Buddha, the Christ and of all other great religious teachers.—S. D.

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SPIRITUAL RADIANCY

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All of Swami Paramananda's works and other Vedanta literature, as well as the monthly publication, "Message of the East", may be obtained directly from Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, Los Angeles County, Calif., and from Vedanta Centre, 176 Marlboro St., Boston, Mass. They are obtainable also from the following addresses:

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tryndall

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SPIRITUAL RADIANCY

By Swami Paramananda

(Teachings given by Swami Paramananda at the Summer School, Ananda-Ashrama, August, 1926. The "Book of Daily Thoughts and Prayers" was used at the morning meditation, the "Dhammapada" at noon, and the "Bhagavad-Gita" in the afternoon.)

Morning Meditation:—



WE need joy for the expansion of our soul. We may easily wonder why so much emphasis is laid on joy. In the life of Sri Ramakrishna especially a peculiar emphasis is laid on the joyous nature, and in Bhakti-Yoga, Swami Vivekananda speaks of it as a very necessary quality for spiritual attainment. Then when we make a survey of the lives of spiritual personages, we find that though some of them do not express so much outwardly, there is always a joyous spirit present. All morbid, negative feeling opens certain avenues for that which leads to evil. I do not personally believe that there is any devil or evil spirit hovering over us, but through brooding we manage to conceive destructive elements which are detrimental to our soul-consciousness. And so joy, the element of joy, of cheerfulness, is a very great safeguard against evil. It is more like the sunlight, it keeps everything sanctified. If a room does not get any sun, all the contents of that room grow musty and we have a sense that they are not pure. Sun is a great purifier. The ra-

diance of the soul always means a certain exuberance, cheerfulness, joyousness.

"Thou art the root of this life-plant;
Not knowing the secret of its being,
It lifted its head to the light,
Spreading its limbs in space
As if eager for flight.
But earth held it firm to its root
While sun, rain and air
By their unfailing care,
Brought it to ripening."

Of course, we all understand the significance of this. We sometimes forget where we have the root of our life and we think we would have freedom merely by severing ourselves from the ground; but just as all the elements, —rain, air, earth,—help the tree to come to ripening, so all the experiences of life, even though sometimes they seem like bondage to us, give us fruition.

"We must make our life deep-rooted in God." Just think of that. "We must make our life deep-rooted in God. When it is thus rooted, we can walk through life with a smiling heart. The whole world is full of the Spirit of God. Sometimes we close our doors and nothing can penetrate. Our heart becomes barren and dry. Self-consciousness dries it up and attaches it to the finite. Everything becomes parched within us. Only as we open the door to the Divine, can we taste the sweetness of divine joy."

The first thing is to pray with yearning spirit to have that openness, and then after we have found it, to retain it through the day. That is, may we not have any self-distortion, any whim, any rebellion that will take us away from it.

"All-effulgent Spirit, may I make myself open to
Thy holy blessing.
Help me all through the day to walk in Thy
light with joyous heart.
May I seek my joy and my support in Thee alone.
Do Thou enfold me with Thy loving and abiding
protection."

There comes a moment in our spiritual consciousness when we cannot separate anything. This prayer, "May I seek my joy and my support in Thee alone" does not mean that we cut ourselves aloof from everything, but that all things assume only one aspect. Whatever joy we find in the world, in human association, or in anything, we see only that one great Principle dominating, permeating and pervading all.

Noon Lesson:—

May the Real, the Ever-abiding, surround us, shield us, protect us.

"We live happily indeed, not hating those who hate us! Among men who hate us we dwell free from hatred.

"We live happily indeed, free from ailments among the ailing! Among men who are ailing let us dwell free from ailments.

"We live happily indeed, free from greed among the greedy! Among men who are greedy let us dwell free from greed.

"We live happily indeed, though we call nothing our own! We shall be like the bright gods, feeding on happiness!"

Very beautiful is this, the last especially! "We live happily indeed, though we call nothing our own!" The idea of joy, happiness, spiritual bliss, is current everywhere. Wherever we turn, wherever we see any real spiritual radiancy, we find that it is inseparable from that. What are the things which make for happiness? We know that there are people who have a great deal to call their own. They have wealth, they have property, they have many things which can make for happiness, and yet they are not happy. We often think that if we have all the material requirements we shall be happy. On the contrary,

too much possession, too much achievement, are sometimes the very things which rob us of our happiness.

All knowledge, all education, is to teach us humility, to teach us the beneficence of spiritual life, because the more a person knows, if he has the real knowledge, the more he must exhibit humility. As we know more and more of the infinitude of Godhead, why naturally we become overwhelmed with our self-limitation. Not out of defeat, but out of greatness of heart we want to be nothing, so that His power may shine through us. Humility is a very beautiful attitude. You never can quarrel with a humble person; you never can thwart a humble person. That is the reason his enemies are sometimes so incensed; they cannot touch him. They say, "Why does he not strike back?" If they maltreat him, he is so humble that it does not hurt him, and if they speak unkindly to him, he does not take it. That is one of the most beautiful qualities of the soul.

Happiness is born of spiritual feelings, so here the Lord Buddha teaches: "We live happily indeed, not hating those who hate us." You cannot expect that all people are going to love you. It is not in the destiny of man. Even Saviours do not have that, but also they do not have reaction as ordinary people do. If a man hates the ordinary type of person, that person reacts with hatred, perhaps with greater hatred. But the Buddha says: "We live happily indeed, not hating those who hate us, and by not being angry with those who are angry with us." It applies to any circumstance in life. "Among men who hate us, we dwell free from hatred." It is the greatest possible victory a man can have.

When we pray, instead of praying, "O Lord, save me from all difficulties," it is wiser to pray, "When I have

my difficulties, when I am treated badly, misunderstood, or thwarted by circumstances of life, may I have strength, may I never forget Thy blessing." That kind of prayer makes one more secure than merely asking to be saved. I do not know why it dawns on me with such tremendous emphasis that the whole strength of spiritual wisdom is contained in what Christ said: "Those who lay down their lives for My sake, those who give up their lives, the same shall live." It seems to come anew, afresh. There is no other way. It is by giving up that we gain our eminence. When we have given up all, we have all. Give. Give. "Give thy life and give thy love." It is a very mighty, a very beautiful thing in our life when we can give without being afraid.

"We live happily indeed, free from ailments among the ailing." Of course, ailments are not just the physical ailments. Fever of the body is not half so dangerous as that of the mind—fever of selfishness, fever of greed, fever of hatred, they come and consume, and nothing can quench such fever except the blessing of God. But the blessing of God can only rest on that person who has humble heart, lowly spirit. "We live happily indeed, free from ailments among the ailing." It is beautiful. If you can get the significance of these things, why your life becomes filled with happiness. The world may try to cheat you, to rob you, or deprive you, but it cannot rob you of that one thing which floods your life with sunshine and the spirit of joy. Unbroken—unbroken and unbreakable! It cannot be broken at any time. It is not a substance that can be broken. Unbreakable!

"We live happily indeed, free from greed among the greedy." It is so very, very wonderful,—the teaching of the master-spirits. The world thinks it is not practical.

If a greedy man comes who wants to take something away from us, we say, "Let us capture that man; let us give him a beating, let us annihilate him." But the master-spirits say, "This is not the way to cope with evil. Give him something other than this. Overcome the greedy with your liberality, the hateful by your love, the violent by your gentleness." Of course, it seems to us impractical, a visionary teaching, but for them it is practical because they have the courage. One who has not the courage to give and who is always afraid of losing, he cannot do it. With them it is not a question of pretending. They actually see the divine in man and are not deceived by the outer appearances, and that gives them victory over all things. Having conquered self, they conquer everything; having no greed in themselves, they can overcome the greedy. We must have the blessing before we can give it to others, and to have it we cannot help but give it to others just by living. Living gives it. Sometimes we do not grasp this, or grasp it wholly; then suddenly it dawns. These very things we have read, we have appreciated them, but when we are ready for them they come with tremendous emphasis. We feel that our own life is blending with them, we realize these ideas; but we have to keep that realization.

"We live happily indeed, though we call nothing our own." Nothing our own! That is detachment—freedom from attachment. It does not mean actually giving up everything outwardly, but the mind must be detached. For instance, a person may possess a great deal, yet be free from attachment, and because he is unattached, he can help others, while another may not have anything and yet be tremendously bound to the little he has. One cannot judge from the exterior or from any outer condition. It is the quality of mind. King Janaka, for instance, the most

ideal king, was absolutely detached although he had the responsibility of a kingdom and possessed everything which is productive of bondage. One day he was discussing with an ascetic the problem of the soul when a messenger brought news that his palace was on fire, that everything was burning and that he must escape. Here was a king forced to see his kingdom perhaps destroyed, it would be a most extraordinary thing for him to remain unmoved; yet this was his reply: "Even if the whole kingdom should burn to ashes, it does not touch me; it does not destroy anything that is pertaining to my real being"; while the ascetic who had very little to lose, a few books or a loin cloth, became anxious concerning them. Here we see theoretical knowledge and real wisdom. Do not look upon this as a poetic story or as a parable belonging to the distant past. It is happening everywhere. In emergencies, in unexpected events we exemplify our wisdom, our tranquillity, by our conduct. If we have any fear, if we have any attachment, in spite of all our pretending, we will show nervousness, and if we have not these, we will remain firm.

Here is where man excels. Even those conditions we call unfortunate or miserable, and which seem like a curse, even those have such wonderful blessings. But who can take the blessing? Only he whose life is in tune. What we are going to receive and when we are going to receive it, that should not be the question; it is not our concern. Leave that aside entirely. But to be able to receive the blessing whenever it comes, and to be able to retain it, that is the individual's task—his greatest task. Let us keep our heart and mind, our body and thoughts, and all our interests in tune. If we can do that, the rest will come. "We live happily indeed, though we call nothing our own." Our happiness does not consist in a great deal of

possession, in the prosperity of the world. It consists in the prosperity of the soul.

“We shall be like the bright gods, feeding on happiness.” That is a beautiful thought,—“feeding on happiness”. There are souls who are fed, nurtured in this way. Their happiness they draw from the air, from the ether, from the atmosphere, from people. The whole world is full of *Anandam*—bliss, and it is so lovely to see how all spiritual personages through their thoughts, through their words, through their actions, through their whole being radiate the spirit of bliss, the spirit which permeates all. That is God. Whenever we do not have that bliss, it means we have not the Presence of God, we have filled ourselves with worries and anxieties and those aspects of life which are unreal.

Let us be free from all weight, from all heaviness, from all despondency, and let our hearts be filled with the Spirit of God. When we keep the light burning, then there will be no danger for ourselves or for others. There will be no access for the powers of darkness. Let us ever keep the light burning!

Afternoon Class:—

“The pleasures that are born through contact of the senses with sense objects are ever channels of pain. They have beginning and all things that have beginning come to an end; therefore the wise never seek their pleasure in and through them.” All such pleasures are ever producers of pain. In short, those who are wise in their instinct, they do not seek their satisfaction in the outer life. Sense pleasure means outer life,—pleasing sound, pleasing touch, pleasing sight—and all such experiences are changeable. As long as we depend on them, so long do we have this

continuous rising up and falling down on the emotional plane. For this reason the wise through the power of discrimination train themselves to rise above these, to overcome them. It is not that they do not have a sense of pleasure or pain; they experience pleasure but it is not so vacant or so shallow.

"He who can withstand the onslaught of anger, lust, greed, avarice, all these strong forces, before he is separated from the body, from the flesh, he is indeed a victor. He is really the happiest of all." When a person through self-control, through understanding can bring himself to a point where he can remain unshakable no matter what happens, where nothing can cause anger, greed, lust—these are inseparable—he is really becoming a saint, he is established in his spiritual life. Such a person is esteemed, he is truly happy, because his happiness is stable. In order to gain this, people sometimes practise austerity; they train the flesh. In extreme hot weather, there are those who practise endurance. The ordinary heat is not enough, they seek a spot which is exposed to the sun. Perhaps on a mid-summer's day they light a fire all about them and sit trying not to feel the heat. Again in extremely cold weather there are ascetics who will expose themselves without anything on, or will plunge into icy water without feeling it. At first they feel it, and then gradually they do not feel it so much.

You may wonder why any one should do this, should voluntarily go through such an experience. But our body has great power for endurance and we can increase that power. We can make it so enduring that it is not afflicted by anything; also we can make it very spoiled, like a spoiled child, whimpering and susceptible to everything. I am not saying this so that any one should go to an extreme. It

is not merely the flesh, the body, that we should train, but the mind, although I doubt very much that the flesh can be brought to this point without the co-operation of the mind. What does it signify? There is no temptation for one who has departed from life; that is to say, the body that is left behind is not susceptible to any kind of temptation. The idea is, that if the mind is withdrawn as much as possible from the body, the body does not feel so much, nor do its feelings play such havoc as they do in the average person's life. The highest achievement in this line is when the mind is in tune with the spiritual Essence. It is brought in tune quite unconsciously, involuntarily. The mind is put in contact with the light, with spiritual beatitude, and there we find everything is adjusted without our knowing it. The involuntary way is much the better way—it is the best way. The great mystics and saints do not follow devious methods in finding their spiritual balance. Rather, they seek the Highest, and having found their contact with the Highest, these lower conditions all find their adjustment.

“He whose happiness is within, whose recreation and realization are within, whose light is from within, that Yogi having attained his oneness reaches absolute freedom.” It is a beautiful passage in the Gita. You see it is what the Christian mystics call mystic union. Yoga means that,—gaining this oneness, overcoming all distractions, making the mind one-pointed. Having focussed all the faculties on One, the Yogis find this oneness, that highest place of *Brahman*, the Supreme, born of this oneness.

It is Nirvana! That word is used in connection with Buddha, and the Occidental mind often confuses this with passivity, self-extinction. It really means freedom; also

it means a state of bliss. It is a very beautiful state of consciousness. Connect this with the first passage I gave: The wise men do not revel, do not seek their pleasure in things of the sense. That is, in passing, changing phenomena. When through self-mastery, through meditation, through harmonious working out, they come to this point of oneness, then they find their happiness within, their realization within. A man cannot give up outside things until he finds something inside.

This idea of renunciation is very paralyzing to some people, because if you give up something and have nothing to fill its place, it leaves a vacuum, and that always causes unhappiness to the individual. When there is emptiness, it must be filled. But there should never be any emptiness. When our heart, mind and thoughts are filled with the Grace of God, nothing else can possibly fill them. That is the reason why really great souls do not bother so much about evil. They let it alone. They try to fill their heart, mind and soul, even their bodily actions with that which is good, and when they have saturated their consciousness, their whole being with that, there is no room left for evil or for what is inharmonious. "When all their imperfections are exhausted, they attain that highest place of *Brahman*." We cannot say that any kind of work is absolutely evil or sinful. If you analyze, I think you will find that this is the only logical explanation of what the world calls sin. Its only remedy is to practise the opposite. When our heart is perpetually filled with the light of God, there can never be any danger from darkness.

Wondrous state of man! never so happy as when he has lost all private interests and regards, and exists only in obedience and love of the Author.—*Emerson*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

"O God, Thou art the doer, not I"—this is knowledge. Be lowly and humble only thus can you rise. The lark builds its nest on the ground, but it soars high up in the sky.—*Sri Ramakrishna*

There is an awful warmth about my heart like a load of immortality. . . The roaring of the wind is my wife, and the stars through the window-pane are my children.

—*John Keats*

Let us never be discouraged by our weaknesses. The sun has many spots. On that account does it cease to give light? So let us shine with the light which He, the true Light, gives us. He will remove our defects and make us perfect. Our duty is to shine. The fire-fly is one of the smallest of insects; yet it gladdens the heart of the traveller with its tiny light.—*Sadhu Sundar Singh*

As everybody, I have enjoyed and I have suffered in my life, but I have never been unhappy. Neither in years of peace, nor of trial nor of success, have I ceased to keep in the intimate depths of my being repose and silence.

—*Cardinal Mercier*

When in the lowering sky thunders the storm-
cloud's drum,

And all the pathways of the birds are thick with
rain,

The brother sits within the hollow of the hills
Alone, rapt in thought's ecstasy. No higher bliss
Is given to men than this.

—*Psalms of the Brethren. (Buddhist)*

Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee.—*St. Augustine*

Let the Brothers take care not to appear long-faced, gloomy or over-pious; but let them be joyous about their faith in God, laughing and agreeable companions.

—*St. Francis of Assisi*

Homage to Thee, O Thou who art within Thy divine shrine, who shinest with rays of light and sendest forth radiance from Thyself; who decreest joy for millions of years unto those who love Him, who givest their heart's desire unto mankind.—*Egyptian Book of the Dead*

There can be no very black melancholy to him who lives in the midst of Nature and has his senses still. . . Nothing can rightly compel a simple and brave man to a vulgar sadness. While I enjoy the friendship of the seasons, I trust that nothing can make life a burden to me.

—*Henry D. Thoreau*

Love towards a thing eternal and infinite feeds the mind wholly with joy, and is itself unmingled with any sadness; wherefore it is greatly to be desired, and sought for with all our strength.—*Spinoza*

There is no guilt greater than to sanction ambition; no calamity greater than to be discontented with one's lot; no fault greater than the wish to be getting. Therefore the sufficiency of contentment is an enduring and unchanging sufficiency.—*Tao-Teh King*

Religion gives you nothing new; it only takes off obstacles and lets you see your Self. . . Melancholy is an almost insuperable barrier. If you have once known *Brahman* (the Supreme) never after can you be melancholy.—*Swami Vivekananda*

ETERNAL BLESSEDNESS

By Johann Gottlieb Fichte

Religion elevates him who is devoted to her service, above time as such, above the transient and the perishable, and puts him in immediate possession of eternity. On the one original Divine Life his eye reposes; there his love is rooted; original Life, is not beyond it but within it, and is merely a temporary form of its development according to an absolute law which likewise lies within itself. He sees all things only in and through this one original life, and in this life he sees the whole infinite universe of being. His view is thus always the view of the Eternal, and what he sees, he sees as eternal and in the Eternal: nothing can truly *be* which is not, even on that very account, eternal. Every fear of perishing in death, and every effort to discover an artificial proof of the immortality of the soul, lies far beneath him. In every moment of his existence he has immediate possession of the eternal life with all its blessedness; and he needs no argument or inference to prove the truth of that which he possesses in ever-present feeling and consciousness.

There is no more striking proof that the knowledge of the true religion has hitherto been very rare among men, and that in particular it is a stranger in the prevailing systems, than this: that they universally place eternal blessedness beyond the grave, and never for a moment imagine that whoever will, may here and at once be blessed.

Mortal though I be, yea ephemeral, if but a moment I gaze up to the night's starry domain of heaven, then no longer on earth I stand—I touch the Creator, and my lively spirit drinketh immortality.—*Ptolemy the Astronomer*

GLORY OF LOVE

Gautama Buddha

(An Exhortation to His Disciples)

Men may use manifold speech towards you, brethren, rough and smooth, kind and cruel. But *ye* have, towards every one of them to cultivate these thoughts: We will not let our heart be disturbed nor evil sound escape our lips, kind and compassionate will we abide, our heart affectionate, free from secret malice. And such men will we irradiate with loving heart, and going beyond them will we irradiate the whole world with heart of love, broad, deep, unbounded. If a man sought with spade and basket to dig up and remove the whole earth how should he succeed? For deep and immeasurable is the earth. Well then, say ye: we will suffuse the whole world with a heart like the great, immeasurable earth. And if a man came with paints and sought to paint pictures on the sky, how should he? For formless and invisible is space. Well then, say ye: we will suffuse the whole world with a firmamental heart, grown wide and infinite. And if a man came and sought to dry up Ganges with a torch, how should he? . . . Well then, say ye: we will suffuse the whole world with a heart like Ganga, deep and infinite, free from wrath and ill-will. . .

All the means that can be used as a basis for well-doing are not worth the sixteenth part of the emancipation of the heart through love; that takes all those up into itself, outshining them in radiance and in glory. Just as whatsoever stars there be, their radiance avails not the sixteenth part of the radiance of the moon, that takes all those up into itself, outshining them in radiance and in glory. Just as in the last month of rains, at harvest time, the sun, mounting up on high into the clear and cloudless sky, over-

whelms all darkness in the realms of space and shines forth in radiance and in glory. Just as at night when the dawn is breaking, the morning star shines out in radiance and glory. Just so all the means that can be used as a basis towards well-doing avail not the sixteenth part of the emancipation of the heart through love, that takes all those up into itself, outshining them in radiance and in glory.

INWARDNESS OF DEVOTION

By John Ruysbroeck

We cannot achieve true unity unless the Spirit of God blows to a flame His fire in our hearts. For this fire makes one with itself and like to itself all that it can master and reshape.

Unity is this: that a man feel himself to be gathered together with all his powers in the unity of his heart. Unity brings inward peace and restfulness of heart. Unity of heart is a bond which draws together body and soul, heart and senses, and all the outward and inward powers and encloses them in the union of love. From this unity springs inwardness; for none can be inward save him who is gathered together in unity within himself. Inwardness means that a man is turned within, into his own heart, that thereby he may understand and feel the interior workings, and the interior words of God. Inwardness is a sensible fire of love which the Spirit of God has blown to a flame, and which urges a man from within; and he knows not whence it comes nor what has befallen him.

From inwardness there springs a sensible love which fulfills the man's heart and the desirous power of the soul. This yearning love and this sensible fruition of the heart none can have save he who is inward of heart. Sensible

love is a yearning and savouring delight which we feel in God as the eternal Good, wherein are all other goods. Sensible love forsakes all creatures as regards pleasure, not as regards need. Inward love feels itself moved from within by the Eternal Love; and this it must ever cherish. Inward love easily foregoes and despises all things that it may obtain that which it loves.

Of this sensible love is born devotion to God and to His glory. For none can have within his heart the hunger of devotion save him who bears within himself a sensible love of God. Where the fire of love sends up the flames of its desire to heaven, there is devotion. Devotion moves and draws a man, both from without and from within, towards the service of God. Devotion makes body and soul to blossom in nobility and worth before God and before all men. Devotion is demanded of us by God in every service which we ought to do to Him. Devotion purifies the body and the soul of everything that can stop and hinder us. Devotion shows and bestows the right way at blessedness.

A PRAYER

By Mildred Phillips

Dear Lord, along this path we daily tread,
Each moment lead us by Thy love divine,
Lest we, by stumbling, lose the blessed bread
Or, heedless, spill the sacramental wine.

And when the road divides on either hand,
One way descending broad and smooth and fair,
Let us together like a beacon stand
To point the pathway up the narrow stair.

The efflux of the soul is happiness.—*Walt Whitman*

BURN THOU STEADILY ON!

By Swami Paramananda

Burn, burn, burn Thou steadily on!
Consume all, conflagrate all with
Thy flame of love!

Burn in my heart,
Burn in my soul,
Burn in my body,
Burn in my mind.
Burn, burn, burn Thou steadily on!

Sin will cease,
Dark will pass,
Doubt will die,
Gloom will fade
Before Thy radiant glow.
Burn, burn, burn Thou steadily on!

Flame of Love,
Flame of Life,
O Thou eternal, undying Flame!
Day and night, sleep and wake,
Burn Thou steadily on!

Burn Thou in,
Burn Thou out,
Burn Thou ever on;
Burn in my heart,
Burn in my soul,
Burn Thou steadily on!

DAYS IN AN INDIAN MONASTERY

By Sister Devamata

(Chapter 1. "Monastic Life in India" appeared in volume 1 of the "Message". We begin with Chapter II. While the book is in preparation for press, occasional chapters will appear in the "Message".)

II

A GREAT INDIAN MONK

Swami Ramakrishnananda stands as a towering figure in my Indian life. He was an inherent part of it from the moment when he waited on the station platform to greet me as the in-coming train brought me to Madras until he leaned through the railway carriage window to give a parting word of counsel as the out-going Bombay mail carried me Westward. There was always a bigness and a majesty about him that impelled. He had a way of sweeping aside the belittling details of life and leaving large spaces for nobler thought and action.

I recall one afternoon when he sat on my upper verandah for four hours talking to me of God and godly living. His face was alight, his whole being seemed to glow with the exalted joy of his thought. Suddenly he rose, strode down the narrow brick stairway and along the dusty road to the Monastery gate. His step was so uplifted, his bearing so lofty that as I watched him approach the gate, quite spontaneously and involuntarily I felt surprise that he was not as tall as the Monastery. He looked to me taller.

With a few words he could make a universe crumble. "That this world is hollow and unreal I can prove to you in a few minutes," he said to me one evening as we sat in the Monastery hall at Mylapore. "All memory exists in the mind. Indeed the mind is made up of memory; therefore all the past and all the future exist in the mind, only the present exists in the senses. Now how long does any sense-perception last? Just the point of time when the

object comes in contact with the sense-organ, then at once it becomes a matter of memory.

"This point of time—like Euclid's geometrical point—actually has no magnitude. The present therefore is in reality only such a point without dimensions, but man, because he wishes to live in his senses, magnifies this point. He extends it to the 'present age' or the 'present time' or to 'now-a-days', which means these few weeks or months or years. Actually the present has no real conceivable existence and only the past and future have duration. As these exist in mind the whole of the universe may be said to be in mind; and when a man goes out of his mind he goes out of the universe.

"This is proved when a man is in sound sleep. At that time he goes away from his mind and his senses. He does not remember that he has a wife or a child, that he owes money, that he has a house or a garden; all these have ceased to exist for him. Even God Himself disappears. Only when he wakes up does he gradually remember them and his anxieties return. This shows that they only exist in the mind and have no existence outside. When a man once understands this, he ceases to care for the mirage of the mind, this mirage of the senses. This world of outer creation then appears to him hollow and meaningless and nothing can disturb him."

On another occasion he said: "The whole universe exists for a man between the two ends of the nerves,—this outer end on the surface of the skin, and the inner end in the spinal column. One part of the network leads me out through the channel of the eyes, another takes me out through the ears, another through the tongue; so this universe of forms and sounds, tastes and touch comes into existence. We are as it were caught in this net of the ner-

vous system. We have entangled ourselves and we seem to love to entangle ourselves. Such is the perversity of our nature. But only when we extricate ourselves from this labyrinth of nerves can we hope to be free."

It was characteristic of Swami Ramakrishnananda that he should have set as one of the last tasks of his life to prove how and where mental space merged into spiritual. Indian philosophical teaching holds that each sphere of activity, physical, mental and spiritual, has its own space with its special dimensional conditions. The Swami believed that if he could open the higher realms of thought by scientific demonstrable steps, he would provide a satisfying religion for all material scientists, who now look upon pure spiritual verities as undemonstrable visions.

He requested the professor of a local college to procure for him all the latest, most authoritative books on Astronomy and he began a zealous study of them. It was not difficult for him to understand even the most abstruse among them, as he was an able mathematician and played with logarithms as a boy with marbles. More than once when I went across to the Monastery in the early morning I found him sitting on his mat by the open door working out a problem in trigonometry as a pastime.

There was no deception in his mind, however, regarding the limitations of this outward method. It might carry him to the farthest reach of vastness, but there would always be space and more unexplored space beyond. He knew that his ultimate course must be inward. "Actually time, space and causation are not separate entities outside; they all exist in me, that is, in my mind. The whole universe is inside the man," are his own words. Yet, although he saw clearly the boundary lines of material science, he also recognized its value and essential place in human evolution.

"Science is the struggle of man in the outer world. Religion is the struggle of man in the inner world," he declared one evening. "Science makes man struggle for Truth in the outside universe and religion makes him struggle for Truth in the inside universe. Both struggles are great, no doubt, but one ends in success and the other ends in failure. That is the difference. Religion begins where science ends.

"The whole scientific method is based on observation and experiment; but the moment man realizes that there is something beyond observation and experiment he will give them up and leave material science behind. Science will always have to deal with finite bodies and God is infinite. The scientific method is the ordinary method; for science, as we have seen, is based on observation and experiment and observation and experiment are based on the senses, therefore science cannot go beyond limited being. But God and Truth are limitless.

"How then can we hope to understand God? Of course we can understand Him because we are He. He is inside us. We have got ourself so mixed up with this sense-world, that we imagine that we cannot understand Him. He is the easiest thing for us to understand. He represents our natural condition." And he added: "These scientists who are earnest seekers after Truth, like Darwin, Huxley, Tyn-dall, are sure to realize soon. They are far from Truth who are bound by their sense-nature, because the senses deaden and brutalize."

The Swami's researches grew more and more introspective as he proceeded. He spent long hours in profound thought and interior seeking. How far he advanced in his investigations I never learned, as I left Madras while they were in progress and he made no reference to them

in his letters. At no time were they allowed to absorb all his effort. He kept ample leisure for other occupations. Often I found him with a worn Sanskrit tome in his hand. He was deeply versed in this language of the ancient Indo-Aryans and believed that it had a quality not shared by any other language.

I had a convincing proof of his Sanskrit scholarship one afternoon when some South Indian pandits came to the Monastery. They knew neither English nor Bengali, Swami Ramakrishnananda's native tongue, and he had too limited a knowledge of their tongue, Tamil, to carry on a serious conversation in it, so the pandits proposed that they converse in Sanskrit.

The Swami sat on the rug opposite them rocking slowly back and forth, as he often did, and giving ready answer to their questions or remarks. Suddenly, without understanding their words, I realized that the conversation had turned on me and in a moment the pandits began intoning the melodious lines of the Sanskrit Scriptures. Swami Ramakrishnananda explained to me that he had requested them to chant that I might hear how they chanted the Vedas in Southern India. The pandits had wonderfully mellow voices and as the swaying words rolled from their lips, marked by a low clapping of hands, it had the rhythmic fundamental sound of a long ocean swell with an occasional breaking wave as accent.

A profound acquaintance with the Vedas by no means gave the full measure of the Swami's scriptural learning. He was an untiring student of all the great Scriptures. He knew the Bible from cover to cover and expounded it in a spirit and with an understanding which are rare even in Christian countries. Every Friday at six he held a class at the Hindu Theological High School. When Good Fri-

day came, he talked on the Crucifixion. The depth of feeling and the vividness of his description of those last hours on Calvary seemed possible only to one who "had seen" as Browning makes St. John say in his "Death in the Desert". My whole being was stirred by the living reality of his words and as we drove home I asked how he could make it so real and living. He sat silent for a moment, then he said quietly and simply: "My Master used to tell me that in a previous life Saradananda and I were Christ's disciples."

One evening a torrential tropical storm swept over Mylapore after *Arati*, the Hindu Vesper Service. Some Mohammedan students who were passing took shelter in the Monastery. Swami Ramakrishnananda gave them cordial welcome and then with the spiritual courtesy which characterizes the Ramakrishna Mission he began talking to them, not of the Vedas and his own form of faith, but of their religion and the Koran. His exposition of the words of Mohammed was so illuminating that the students returned every evening for a week to hear more of it.

The first day the questioning of the group was chiefly regarding the personal reality of Satan. When the young men had gone, Swami Ramakrishnananda turned to me and said: "What in the West they call the devil, we here in India call ego. In the West they externalize their devil. Here, too, they do it, but not in the same way. The West also puts their God far off up there somewhere, while the Hindu keeps Him inside.

"It is the greatest relief when we get rid of egotism. It is as if a heavy burden rolled off. At once all our doubts and fears, anxieties and troubles disappear. When the "I" is gone, nothing remains but God or Divinity. Let Him exist alone in His glory. Deny ego, it is the cause of

all your miseries." Then he added in incisive tones: "You will have to get rid of this ego, you will have to drive out the first personal pronoun 'I', before you can realize God.

"Bring God inside yourself. This is the way to forget the ego. Feel His Presence in your heart. The moment you feel that Presence, you will not have to drive away the ego. It will disappear of itself. Selfishness will go. Your little glory will be lost in the infinite glory of God."

With all his intellectual attainments, Swami Ramakrishnananda was above everything a devotee. It was his ardor of devotion which won for him his Master's name. "I would like to have taken it myself, but I thought Sashi deserved it more," Swami Vivekananda said to a fellow-disciple, who repeated it to me. Sashi was Swami Ramakrishnananda's name before he took up the religious life and he is still known as "Sashi Maharaj" among the members of the Order.

When Sri Ramakrishna passed away Swami Ramakrishnananda made a vow that he would not desert his Master's ashes. His brothers in the nascent religious Order went out to wander as mendicant monks and were not heard from during long periods, but for twelve years Swami Ramakrishnananda kept unbroken vigil in the Shrine dedicated to his Master. He brought the water from the Ganges for use in the daily worship, he polished the altar vessels, he gathered flowers and prepared the food for the offering to the Lord, and never wearied of his holy service.

Often for dress he had only a piece of cloth large enough to cover his loins and as he carried the large jar of water for the Shrine on his shoulders, the servants along the river bank joked with him and treated him as one of them. I heard from others that he never

indicated by manner or gesture that he belonged to a Brahmana family of high standing in the community.

(To Be Continued)

THE SUN-LIKE SAGE

Yoga Vasistha Maharamayana

The man of vision in his fair, just, polite and undissembling behaviour, and by his placid and pleasing countenance, resembles the fair moon with her ambrosial beams. He acts with sound wisdom and prudence, is polite and civil in his manners, is prompt in serving and obliging others, is holy in his conduct and humorous in his discourse. He is as clear and cold, soft and pleasing as fresh butter, and his company is delightful to people even at his very first appearance. The deeds of wise men are as pure and grateful to mankind as are the dews of moonbeams to the whole of nature. The society of holy and wise men, like the pure waters of the heavenly river, serve to cleanse the sins and purify the minds of the sinful. The man whose soul is purified by the association with holy men is as a sheet of linen cloth flaming with fire. The holy saint shines with the effulgence of his own person, as does the sun with its golden beams, diffusing a pure light all around the world. It is the nature of virtuous men to deliver their neighbours from danger and calamity and to lead them to their well-being and prosperity as the sun leads people to light.

The seer who has seen the glory of God is situated in the region of light. Like a lighted lamp he dispels his inner darkness together with all outward fears, animosities and attachments. I bow down before that sun-like sage who is set beyond darkness on every side, who is raised above all created things, and whose great glory is never liable to obscurity.

REPORT

With Swami Paramananda's return from Boston on July 30th, summer activities commenced at Ananda-Ashrama. The Summer School which the Swami had announced by wire a few days before his arrival, became an accomplished fact within a week after his return. Let no one, however, think of it as a series of prosaic classes. Everything that the Swami touches becomes a spontaneous expression of his inner spirit, and this school was no exception. Classes there were, but they were more in the nature of intimate gatherings under the trees, all sitting on the grass around the Swami who for a few precious moments shared with us his vision, speaking to us of eternal truths and their application to human affairs. At eight in the morning when the whole Ashrama sparkles with new life and everything is fresh and fragrant, the Swami held the morning meditation, commenting on the day's lesson from the "Book of Daily Thoughts and Prayers." At noon, tasks were laid aside, whether of the desk or of the field, and the workers were again brought into contact with the inner Source of things, this time through the Swami's interpretation of the teachings of the Buddha as contained in the "Dhammapada." At four in the afternoon the Swami spoke on the "Bhagavad-Gita." This was the schedule for the day. What cannot be recorded is the living atmosphere of beauty, simplicity and holiness: exalted teaching given in the midst of nature with the birds singing a constant accompaniment. Business men and women who came to spend their vacation at the Ashrama were profoundly affected by the spirit and power of this school and went back to their work refreshed and restored.

On August 22nd, the Swami spoke for the Pasadena Forum at a meeting held in Library Park, Pasadena, at an

early hour in the morning. These out-door meetings are always happy occasions, but they are seldom possible outside the Ashrama.

The Liberal Catholic Church of St. Albans in Hollywood, where Swami spoke three years ago, again claimed him for its Vesper Service of August 29th. A large congregation was present and deep interest shown in the Swami's address which had as its theme, "Yoga and Mysticism."

Another valuable church connection was made by the Swami when, at the invitation of the Rev. Dr. Evans, he took the pulpit at La Canyonada's beautiful new Community Church, on Sunday morning, September 19th, speaking on "Harmony of Life." La Canyonada is the neighbouring town to La Crescenta, so that many friends and neighbours were privileged to hear the Swami in a familiar Christian setting. Dr. Evans in introducing him spoke with profound feeling of him and of his work.

In addition to these activities, the Swami has been giving a series of lectures on Friday evenings during August and September, at the Divine Science Church in Los Angeles, and during the month of September has spoken on Wednesday evenings in Alhambra at the home of two old students whose sincere efforts have gone far towards making these evenings a success.

* * *

The Vedanta Centre of Boston, deprived of the Swami's presence for many months, save for a brief visit from him after his return from India, has no special summer activities to report. With admirable steadiness the work has gone on, however, classes and services being ably conducted by Sister Satya-Prana and Miss Philadelphus. When the Swami returns there this fall he is sure to find, as always, warm welcome from many faithful friends.

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NOVEMBER, 1926

DYNAMIC THOUGHT

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"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tryndall

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DYNAMIC THOUGHT

Class Talk by Swami Paramananda



great personage once said that those who are accompanied by lofty thoughts are never lonely, and it is true. If we have inspiration or access to that sphere of existence whence inspiration comes, we never can feel lonely or defeated by circumstances; and if we do not have our access there, what confusion it creates in our life. For this reason, wise men seek the companionship of noble thoughts far more than they seek material advantage or the company of human beings. The average person thinks that in order to have welfare, happiness or success, he must devote himself wholly to the physical, because it is real, very definite. Yet this point of view defeats our purpose more often than does anything else. We do not gain our material ends by limiting our mind, our actions and our aspirations to the physical. Of course, in one sense there should not be any distinction between the physical and the spiritual; but so long as there is a distinction, we must guard ourselves against this fallacy that we are going to preserve ourselves merely by thinking of our bodily interest, or that we are going to acquire happiness by striving only through ordinary channels.

in our life and in our mind. Therefore, in order to be able to aid people it is necessary to find access into their sphere of consciousness. We must not be one-sided at any time.

There are many who can talk about current topics very successfully, about machinery, automobiles, aeroplanes and radio but who have no point of contact with anything more profound. These subjects are interesting, they are different aspects of human life, but they are passing and shifting. There is no stability or happiness in them and sooner or later we find this out. The idea, however, of that One Absolute Being without a second, the Foundation of life, the Source of all existence, Source of all strength, if we grasp that, at once it changes our whole life and attitude. We cannot partake of something big and continue to be small. We cannot recognize our inherent security as part of that Absolute Being without changing even our tone of voice.

According to our thoughts we are. Even our bodily appearance is influenced by them. Our facial expression sometimes gives absolute indication of what we are thinking. The morbid attitude that we take, or the very vital attitude, both are inspired by inner thoughts. Here is where we reveal ourselves. Either way, a person cannot hide his real being. If he has the realization of that spiritual consciousness, he may conceal himself in a cave, or in a jungle, he may live in a cottage aloof from every one, but his influence will redeem through its own nature. And if he has not touched that realization, although he may come to the foreground and pretend that he has done so, although he may talk glibly about big things, in every turn he will betray himself.

This contact with our Source is the most wonderful

thing in life. When we make it, we are transformed. One who is fearful, he ceases to be fearful; one who is full of doubt, he ceases to be doubting. These are definite facts. We find their working in human existence. We cannot have more courage without bringing that element into everything that we do and say. Our whole life expands in the same proportion. That is why in India and in all ancient systems of profound thought, we are told that we must know That. "Know Thyself" some say. Others tell us to know the Truth, the Kingdom of Heaven, or God. Whatever name they may give, it all leads to one fundamental fact, that our first duty is to make our contact with that Infinite Source.

Theoretically, we may recognize that our first duty is to God, to the Supreme Being, but in practical life how many of us can come out and prove our faith. Yet our whole life's success depends on whether we do this or fail to do it. If we have the courage, if we have the vocation and the feeling, we will do it, and it will mean a complete transformation, not only in our own life, but in the lives of others. It will bring a tremendous force into the world. One person cannot hold the light, even though at first he may do it in order to illumine his own path, without helping others who are walking on the self-same path. That is the most beautiful thing in regard to life: we help without being conscious that we are a source of helpfulness. We cannot be cheerful, we cannot have gladdened spirit without destroying in some measure the gloominess of the world. We may not go about consciously saying: "I shall fight this darkness and gloominess," but our buoyant nature, our understanding spirit,—our very existence tends to overcome them.

Our real mission in life is to learn,—every one of us,—

to feel, at least in some measure, our part in the whole. One who has the light, he does not hide it under a bushel. These are not theories. Theories in themselves have no strength, but as we put them into practical life, we benefit by them, and we do not have to wait until this life is ended. We benefit right here. Our actions are made much more effective and beneficial to ourselves and to others, and our thoughts are magnified. Thought exerts a tremendous influence upon our life! A little thought enters our mind and electrifies us; or perhaps a person comes who is full of exuberance, full of life, and conveys that to us. We all have noticed how when we are walking, imbued with some mighty thought, it seems to lift us till our feet hardly touch the ground. The force of our thought carries us almost on wings. Again there are thoughts which are so heavy, so dull and so gloomy that they make even a healthy person feel life is a terrible burden and he sinks beneath it. We cannot sink without dragging many others with us. These are not far-distant facts, they are very immediate. We experience them every day. It is, however, not enough merely to experience them and pass them by, gaining only a little intellectual understanding through them; we must make them helpful in our life.

Even the mistakes we make are not for any evil end; we learn from mistakes just as much as we learn from good deeds or successful action. There are many who, when they recognize their errors, are terribly burdened by them. It is not a crime for a person to commit a blunder, but it may become a crime if he broods over it and accepts it as a finality. Then it defeats his purpose. There is nothing that should hinder our course, our inward journey. That is where sincerity comes in. After a man has

done something that he should not have done, if he is sincere and realizes his mistake, he makes his atonement, he receives his forgiveness. But when we take the distorted notion that we have blundered, that we have lost in this game of life and that there is no hope for us and no use striving, that attitude becomes a tremendous detriment. Not only for us, others suffer through it,—our friends, relatives and those immediately connected with us.

In India they have what you might call a superstition, a custom, but I think it is a good custom, and if a superstition, a very blessed one. There they feel that at nightfall no house should be kept in the dark, that just at the evening hour, no matter how busy people are, or whatever duties they may have, they should see that a light is burning and that it is kept burning. If this is omitted, it is considered a very bad omen and those who neglect it are regarded as lethargic and lacking in all delicacy of spirit. Let us find the spiritual significance of this. Light reveals; light destroys darkness; if a house is kept filled with light there is little opportunity for any evil to enter, and that is the way individual souls should be kept, with the light burning,—the light of understanding. It is no wonder that wise men always lay the greatest emphasis here. What availeth the glamour of the world if the soul is kept in the dark? All that we may strive to obtain in the way of wealth and power may become a burden. Sometimes people are so overweighted with life's possessions that they even commit suicide in their desire to escape. What a terrible thing that people want to escape from life. It is because they do not understand the true significance of life. They do not know their Source.

"That One though motionless"—motionless because it is all-pervading—"is swifter than the mind. The senses can

never overtake It, for It ever goes before. Though immovable, It travels faster than those who run. By It the all-pervading air sustains all living beings." A very interesting picture,—the picture of the Absolute Being. It may frighten you. You may say: "How can we ever comprehend anything like that?" Yet if you reflect you will see that this cannot be grasped merely through a little alertness of mind or because you may have a feverish desire to become something other than what you are. Feverish desire will not bring it. Just the opposite. When we relax, when we resign, when we surrender, when we let go of the self and all the things that are implied in the restless longing of the self, then there comes a moment of lull. Just as in a body of water when it is absolutely still and unbroken, no ripples, no turbulence, we get a definite, clear picture, so in human life the bigger things are reflected when body, mind and heart are held still and uplifted.

Sometimes we think that with our mentality alone we are going to be able to grasp all things, even heavenly things. Mind can be a tremendous help to us and also it may become a hindrance. A mind that is keen and perceptive is a wonderful asset. Such qualities we need, but there are people in the world so shrewd, so keen, so calculating that they create their own troubles. It is like spreading a net. They spread it not for themselves, but for others, and then through their great complicated scheme of life and over-burdened thoughts, they sometimes step into it themselves and are entangled. This often happens with people who are living in the outer sphere of life. They create bondage by their self-created complications. We cannot wish any one harm without bringing that harm upon ourselves. We cannot wish any one

good without bringing good to ourselves. We cannot love without bringing love into our life. These are eternal laws. They are just as accurate as anything we have ever seen with our eyes. When we think we might do something contrary and find the same result, that is where we blunder. There is no chance, no anarchy. When we believe in these truths with our whole heart and soul, when our faith is real and established, then only will our life be transformed and transfigured.

“He who sees all beings in the Self—in God, in the Absolute Being—and that Absolute Being in all beings, all things, all created objects, he never turns away from It, the Self.” This is something I have always cherished, ever since I first knew this wonderful text from the Upanishads. “He who perceives all things, all beings in the great Self, for him how can there be any more delusion or grief when he sees this oneness everywhere?” This is a very big thought. The average mind may be frightened by it. We may say we do not want such oneness, for we might lose something by it,—our individual likes or desires. There is, however, no foundation for such fear. We do not know our immensity. We want happiness, but we bar our ability for attaining happiness because we are not willing to let go; we cling to that which always causes unrest, turbulence and disturbance,—our self-love. Love of self creates havoc; it destroys peace and harmony in the life; it brings anger, jealousy, hatred and all the low, sordid things which make for misery. The realization of the greater, the larger Self, the True, the Real, strikes entirely another note, however. It destroys grief; it destroys illusion; it destroys all restlessness and brings a sense of peace. We may understand the outline of this intellectually, but when through tranquil thoughts and spiritual

atmosphere we come in closer contact with these lofty ideals, then we cannot go wrong.

One of our great Indian teachers used to give this illustration. When a sword is made of steel it is harmful, but when this same sword is brought into contact with the philosopher's stone, it is transformed into gold. Then, although it may still retain its shape, though it may look like a sword, it is incapable of doing any more harm. Same way it is with life. This same life of ours, these hands and feet, this mind and brain, are transformed. Once a person in a moment of anger struck one of his best friends; then beside himself with remorse, he went right to the fire-place, held his hand in the fire and burned it. This may seem like a very heroic act, but it is not by destroying a portion of our body that we root out evil. It is only by transforming it.

Thoughts can be the most beautiful things! They can be better than any riches we may acquire. They can be more fragrant than flowers. They can sweeten our life; they can comfort us in our hour of need; they can give us access to that place which we cannot enter in any other way. If we have the protection of spiritual thought we have the highest protection. Let us always make this our first consideration, then the rest will come. We do not have to shrink from anything; we do not have to fight anything,— we are eternally protected. To know this in actuality, however, is very different from merely holding such thoughts in our mind as theories; for they can have their influence upon us only in accordance with our faith and feeling. We never overcome evil by evil; we overcome evil by good; we overcome evil by Truth; we overcome doubt, despondency and all the ills of life when we find their opposite. That is one of the great lessons we

have to learn, and the sooner we learn it, the better it will be for us. In order that we may produce these great qualities, however, we have to take assistance from meditation, from high thinking. Meditation has a great, a vital place in the life of productive spirituality; but it does not come accidentally to any one. If you see some one who has this faculty developed, you may know that it is not by chance. We have to work for it, live for it.

If we give ourselves to the great supreme Power, it also gives itself to us. When our hands are already filled with non-essentials and some one wants to give us something more, we first have to empty our hands. Same way it is with our mind. We keep it filled with alien thoughts. We carry them because we think we have nothing else to carry. We must learn discrimination,—higher reflection. This teaches us that our life is immeasurable. It grows in its blessing,—in its volume of usefulness. It can never be limited save by our thought; our thought can limit it. Our thought can make us so unhappy that nothing seems worth doing, and also it can expand our consciousness until we feel that life is very blessed. We learn to welcome it and every day we rise with new hope, new courage and see a new dawn.

Speak to others even as you speak to yourself. That is to say, know every one as you know your own self. Do you ever get angry with yourself? Even so behave with others. But that would be possible only when you see your own self existing in others. Indeed there is a plane of consciousness where everything appears as one's own Self. And when one reaches that plane, there is no more confusion for him.—*Swami Turiyananda*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Instead of listening to those who advise us as men and mortals not to lift our thoughts above what is human and mortal, we ought rather, as far as possible, to put off our mortality, and make every effort to live in the exercise of the highest of our faculties; for though it be but a small part of us, yet in power and value it far surpasses all the rest.—*Aristotle*

O son of Kunti, whatever state (or being) one dwells upon in the end, at the time of leaving the body, that alone he attains, because of his constant thought of that state or being. Therefore, at all times think of Me and fight (perform actions). Having offered thy mind and intellect to Me, thou shalt without doubt come unto Me. By the steadfast practice of meditation with unwavering mind and constant thought of the Supreme Divine Being, one goes to Him.—*Bhagavad-Gita*

Son, it is better to be blind of eye than blind of mind; for he that is blind of eye is quick to learn the coming and going of the road, and walks according to his will.

—*Maxims of Ahikar*

We can only have the highest happiness by having wide thoughts.—*George Eliot*

Let the wise man guard his thoughts, for they are difficult to perceive, very artful, and they rush wherever they list: thoughts well guarded bring happiness.

—*Gautama Buddha*

The key to every man is his thought. Sturdy and defying though he look, he has a helm which he obeys, which is the idea after which all his facts are classified.—*Emerson*

THE SECRET OF PRAYER

By Fenelon

You ask to be taught how to pray, and how to seek union with God, so as to be sustained against life's temptations, and I am sure you greatly desire to find the help you need in this holy practice. I think you cannot treat God with too much confidence. Tell Him all that is in your heart, as one unloads one's heart to a dear friend of all that gives it pain or pleasure. Tell Him your troubles, that He may comfort you; tell Him your joys, that He may sober them; tell Him your longings, that He may purify them; tell Him your mislikings, that He may help you to conquer them; talk to Him of your temptations, that He may shield you from them; show Him all the wounds of your heart, that He may heal them. Lay bare to Him your indifference to good, your dissipation, your instability, your leanings to a corrupt world. Tell Him how self-love disposes you to be unjust to your neighbours, how vanity tempts you to be insincere, and to dazzle those with whom you are concerned; how your pride disguises you to yourself as well as to others. If you thus pour out to Him all your weakness, needs, and troubles, there will be no lack of what to say; you will never exhaust this subject, it is continually being renewed.

People who have no secrets from each other never want subjects of conversation; they do not premeditate or weigh their words, because there is nothing to be kept back. Neither do they seek for something to say; they talk together out of the abundance of their heart—without consideration, just what they think. The heart of each speaks to the other; they pour out, so to say, one into another. Blessed are they who attain to such familiar, unreserved intercourse with God! In proportion as you talk to Him

He will talk to you; and often you should be silent and let Him speak, so that you may listen in the stillness of your heart. Say, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth;". . . The Spirit of Truth will teach you inwardly all that Jesus Christ teaches you outwardly in the Gospel. This is no extraordinary inspiration in which you need fear delusion; it will only inspire you with the virtues suited to your condition and the ways of dying to yourself that you may live to God. It is an inward voice, which teaches us as we have need from time to time.

God is the True Friend Who always gives us the counsel and comfort we need. Our danger lies in resisting Him; so it is essential that we get a habit of hearkening to His Voice, of keeping silence within, and listening so as to lose nothing of what He says to us. We know well enough how to keep outward silence and to hush our spoken words; but we know little of interior silence. It lies in hushing our idle, restless, wandering imagination, in quieting the promptings of our worldly minds, and in suppressing the crowd of unprofitable thoughts which excite and disturb the soul. In prayer we should confine ourselves to simple affections and few points, on which it is better to dwell rather with love than argumentatively. Head-work tires, disgusts, exhausts us; but acquiescence of mind and union of the heart do not weary us in the same way. The spirit of faith and love never stanches so long as we do not forsake the Source.

Be patient, then, in prayer, for God's Sake, and go on without stopping; you will be sure to make great way. Trust God simply, like a child, telling Him whatever comes into your mind. The thing is to open your heart to God, to make it familiar with Him, to strengthen it with love. Carefully fostered love enlightens, amends, corrects, encourages.

THE GREAT KING OF GLORY

From the Maha-Sudasanna Sutta

The Four Contemplations

Now the Great King of Glory, O Ananda, ascended into the Chamber of the Great Concourse; and when he had come there he stood before the portals, and there he uttered the intense and heartfelt prayer:

Stay here, O thoughts of lust!

Stay here, O thoughts of anger!

Stay here, O thoughts of hatred!

Thus far only, O thoughts of lust!

Thus far only, O thoughts of anger!

Thus far only, O thoughts of hatred!

And when, O Ananda, the Great King of Glory had entered the Chamber of the Great Concourse and had seated himself upon the couch of gold, having put away all passion, anger, sloth, restless brooding and doubt, he entered into and remained in the First Mystic Contemplation, a state of pleasurable interest or zest and joyous ease, born of concentration, conjoined with reflection and sustained mentation.

Then, suppressing reflection and sustained thought, he entered into and remained in the Second Mystic Contemplation, a state of zest and joyous ease, born of serenity, at rest from reflection and mentation, a state of simple exaltation and inward calm.

Then, stilling zest of interest,—equilibrated, alert, and self-possessed, he entered that state, with body at ease, which the noble ones announce as: “a man is balanced, contemplative, and well at ease,” he entered into and remained in the Third Mystic Contemplation.

Then, passing beyond pleasure and pain, transcending gladness and sorrow, he entered into and remained in the

Fourth Mystic Contemplation, a state of serene and rapturous equilibrium.

The Four Sublime Meditations

Then, O Ananda, the Great King of Glory went forth from the Chamber of the Great Concourse, and entered the golden chamber and seated himself down on the silver couch.

And he let his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of love; and so the second quarter, and so the third, and so the fourth. And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around, within, did he continue to pervade with heart of love, far-reaching, grown great, and beyond measure, free from the least trace of anger or ill-will.

And he let his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of Compassion; and so the second quarter, and so the third, and so the fourth. And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around, within, did he continue to pervade with heart of Compassion, far-reaching, grown great, and beyond measure, free from the least trace of anger or ill-will.

And he let his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of Joy; and so the second quarter, and so the third, and so the fourth. And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around, within, did he continue to pervade with heart of Joy, far-reaching, grown great, and beyond measure, free from the least trace of anger or ill-will.

And he let his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of Serenity; and so the second quarter, and so the third, and so the fourth. And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around, within, did he continue to pervade with heart of Serenity, far-reaching, grown great, and beyond measure, free from the least trace of anger and ill-will.

DAYS IN AN INDIAN MONASTERY

By Sister Devamata

II

A GREAT INDIAN MONK—*Concluded*

For many years Swami Ramakrishnananda conducted the daily worship with unwavering ardor. His fervor of spirit was specially manifest on Feast Days. There was one particular festival of the Divine Mother which tested his endurance in prayer to the utmost. It comes in the late autumn and calls for continuous worship during twenty-four hours. This long interval is usually divided among several celebrants, but Swami Ramakrishnananda would take his place before the altar at six o'clock on the morning of the Festival and remain there until six the next morning without moving from his seat. It was regarded as little short of a miracle even by his Brothers in the Order, some of whom also had great power of spiritual endurance. Several of them spoke to me of it. To Swami Ramakrishnananda it seemed nothing remarkable.

One day I asked him how he was able to do it. He replied modestly, "Devotion can accomplish anything." There rose in my mind a story he had told me. I give it in his own words:—

"One day in the forest Rama and Lakshmana stopped by a clear stream to rest. There they saw a crow, apparently parched with thirst, yet each time it would go down to the water, it would turn again and come back without drinking.

" 'What a foolish crow this must be,' said Lakshmana, 'to be suffering from thirst here on the bank of a stream of cool water and not to drink a single drop.'

" 'Do not judge so hastily, my brother,' Rama replied. 'This crow is a great devotee of God who is constantly

repeating His Name. Whenever he goes down to the water to drink, he remembers that in order to drink he must cease to repeat the Name of the Lord and he cannot bear to do that, so he goes back without drinking.' "

And the Swami added: "The true devotee is like that, he never thinks of himself. He is so full of the thought of God that his own self is forgotten.

"This body is only an instrument, a passive instrument," he continued, "and an instrument really has no existence of its own, for it is wholly dependent on the one who uses it. Suppose a pen were conscious; it could say, 'I have written hundreds of letters,' but actually it has done nothing, for the one who holds it has written the letters. So because we are conscious, we think we are doing all these things, whereas in reality we are as much of an instrument in the hands of a higher Power as the pen is in our hands and He makes all things possible."

Often and often the Swami would repeat a Holy Name with as tireless a zeal as the crowd devotee. I was awakened more than once before dawn with his voice sounding in my ears and I knew he was on the roof terrace of the Monastery lost in devout thought. The rise and fall of the Name in sacred cadence would go on and on without a break. I have known it to continue unremittingly from three o'clock until five with scarcely pause for breath.

During the time of worship in the Shrine some worshippers ring a little tinkling bell, and Swami Vivekananda when he was in an iconoclastic ultra-monistic mood would taunt Swami Ramakrishnananda for his mediaeval bell-ringing tendencies. But Swami Ramakrishnananda was in reality not bound to these outer forms and observances for he said to me one day:

"Every devotee must practise discrimination to be a true

devotee. All these things,—going to Temples, waving burning camphor, making *bhajanam* (singing holy songs) are for beginners. They are the first standard. They are meant for people who in the midst of their worldly activities might not otherwise remember God. A man is hurrying by on some matter of business, he looks up and sees the gate tower of the Temple and for a moment he remembers ‘there is a God.’ That is good, but it is only the initial stage.

“You must go beyond all external observances and realize God in your heart,” he added. “You must know that you are not body nor mind nor ego; you are the eternal Reality behind them all. When you can do this, all this world will seem to you nothing but a playground. It will be like a stage built to play on and you will play your part with the same gusto as the king plays the part of a sweeper in his palace.”

Swami Ramakrishnananda’s devotion was not a surface emotion. It reached down to the deepest roots of his being. There seemed no limit to his surrender and his trust. He had little patience with a wavering half-faith in the higher Power. “Now we only trust God partially,” he said. “We think we can do many things better ourselves. We may say, ‘God, please write this letter,’ but all the time we believe we can write it a little better than He, so we do not entrust it entirely to Him. When, however, we can give up everything to Him, then we shall see how well He will serve us, for He says, of such devotees He actually becomes the servant.”

I asked: “Then where is there any place for individual struggle?”

His answer was: “Individual struggle leads to surrender. Until that comes we shall have to struggle.”

I asked him again whether steadiness in devotion meant that we must always feel the same fervor. He replied: "Steadiness in devotion means that you may be busy with many things, still your mind is always turned toward God. It should be like the needle of a compass, the needle may swing a little to this side or that, but it always has a tendency to point back to true north."

"But do not great devotees often complain of dryness of heart?"

"That very complaining," the Swami answered, "shows that their devotion is strong, even though they may not seem to express it so well as at other times. The very fact that they are restless proves that this dryness of heart is an unnatural condition for them, just as the fish feels dryness and jumps about when it is out of water, water being its natural element. Their devotion is not lessened in any way. So long as the hunger for devotion to God is there, a man is steady in devotion."

Shortly before I left Madras, as we were driving back from the city one evening I expressed regret that I was leaving when he had so few to help him. The answer that came was direct and uncompromising:—

"I do not need any one to help me. I am all full of God. What need have I of any one else? If He sends people to help me, I am satisfied. If He does not send, I am satisfied. I know that whatever He sends is for my good and is the best thing for me."

Swami Ramakrishnananda's early training was of the most orthodox. His father was a conservative high-caste Brahman of the old type,—an able scholar, thoroughly grounded in Sanskrit and in knowledge of the Vedas and rigidly careful in observing Scriptural custom and injunction. The son also kept caste faithfully until he came

under the influence of the Brahmo-Somaj, a Unitarian movement in Bengal during the last century which was strongly tinged with Western ideas and reacted against Vedic tradition.

For a time Swami Ramakrishnananda adopted the more radical habit of life taught in the new Somaj; but in regard to his food he remained unbending. Fish is so abundant in Bengal that it has become the natural food. People look upon it almost as a vegetable and even the most conservative eat it. Swami Ramakrishnananda, however, made no concession.

"I was a vegetarian from my young boyhood," he told me one day when speaking of his early life. "I read a book by Lord Gouranga and at once I gave up all animal food. If I found fish in the curry, I would eat plain dry rice and go away. When I came to Sri Gurumaharaj he told me it was very good for me to be a strict vegetarian." His Master also advised him to observe the regulations of his caste. To some others of his disciples Sri Ramakrishna gave quite different counsel; but he evidently foresaw that Swami Ramakrishnananda's work would be in South India where strong emphasis is laid on caste observance.

Renunciation with Swami Ramakrishnananda was unconditioned and whole-hearted. There was no element of reluctance or sacrifice in it. Giving up meant for him the fruition of life. "Since the world cannot bring us lasting satisfaction, the only remedy is God," he once exclaimed.

"Why should a man give up? Why should he be unselfish? Rather let him be the most selfish man; let him not be satisfied with anything short of infinity. Let him not be content with the little finite things of the world. Let his ambitions be infinite. Let him only give up be-

cause he is going to get a great deal more. If any one throws away one hundred rupees in the street we call him a madman; but if he throws away one hundred rupees to get one hundred thousand, then we think him very sane. So let man give up this world which can bring him only perishable happiness in order to get God who can give him everlasting bliss."

"Man is a hero so long as he struggles. But to conquer one's passions is no joke. Man can only do it by finding something that gives him greater pleasure. To be able to give up the sense-world means that man has found something better. Man must give up everything to God then alone he thrives." At another time he said: "If you will study all the personal religions you will find that all preach renunciation. Renunciation is their fundamental teaching."

The standard he set for himself in the life he had taken up was a very high one. It is summed up in these words:—

"A Sannyasin (one who has renounced) should be ready to help even his worst enemy. That is why we have become Sannyasins,—that we may bring help to every human being without regard to his worthiness or unworthiness. This is not the duty of a householder. He has his wife and children to look after, so he must always be prudent and help only so far as he can without injuring his family."

With all his breadth and loftiness of vision Swami Ramakrishnananda was as humble and simple as a child. There rises before my mind the memory of one morning as he sat talking with me while I ate my breakfast. He sat on a light folding-chair and as he rocked back and forth I was afraid every moment it would break under his heavy weight. The Head of the Order had arrived at the Mon-

astery three days before and Swami Ramakrishnananda had come over to request me to go in town and make certain purchases for him. When he had finished enumerating what was needed he asked abruptly: "Sister, what do you think of our President?" My reply was: "I think he is very wonderful, but I am a little afraid of him." Swami Ramakrishnananda leaned far forward in his chair and whispered, "So am I."

He confided to me then that the President, Swami Brahmananda, had been scolding him gently for not being more careful about wearing the Sannyasi color. As I looked at him and saw his dress, orange to the waist, a brown chuddar about the shoulders and beneath it a pink and white striped shirt I could not but feel that the President had some reason for his reproach.

Swami Ramakrishnananda was always indifferent to appearance and comfort. Once when he had a bald, unflattering photograph taken, I said to him, "Swami, why did you let yourself be photographed in that way?" His answer was, "How could I help it when I look like that?" He was always an imposing figure, but his features were plain save when they were lighted by his smile, which transfigured them and lent them a rare spiritual beauty. I had involuntary proof of this. I was standing on my upper verandah one late afternoon watching a carriage coming down Brodie's Road. A face appeared at the carriage window and I thought quickly, "What a marvellous smile," then I saw that it was Swami Ramakrishnananda.

It is very difficult to portray spiritual greatness. It is too subtle and evasive to be defined by word or line, but Swami Ramakrishnananda will draw his own portrait as he lives and speaks through these pages. This is but a first sketch. Let his own words give the final brush-

stroke to it. They were spoken as the Swami sat under the tall cocoanut palms outside the Monastery door. It was the evening hour. He was silent and abstracted. It was evident that his thought was wholly inward. A question or two passed unanswered. Once he looked up and said: "Excuse me, Sister, but this is a time I like to be quiet." Later the meditative mood passed and he began to talk, referring to certain trying conditions which had risen. I felt rebellious that such things should come to disturb the tranquil tenor of his life and I expressed my feeling. He lifted his head, his eyes lighted up and there was an undaunted ring in his voice as he replied:

"My life is eternal. This little life belongs to God. He created it. Let Him do with it what He will."

OMNIPOTENT MIND

By Sri Ramakrishna

Verily I say unto you, it mattereth not whether ye live the life of a householder or ye are men of the world. Only ye must fix your mind on God. Do your work with one hand and touch the Feet of the Lord with the other. When ye have no work in the world to do, hold His Feet fast to your heart with both your hands.

The mind is everything. If the mind hath lost its liberty, ye lose yours. If the mind is free, ye are free too. The mind may be dipped in colors, red, orange, yellow, violet or green. It is like the white cloth just returned to you by the washerman. This white cloth thou may dip in any color thou likest. Study English, and ye must speak in English in spite of yourself; ye put on boots, ye whistle; in fact ye do your level best to behave like a native of England. The pandit who studies Sanskrit must quote couplets. If the mind be kept in bad company, it will color

one's thought and conversation. Placed in the midst of devotees, one's mind shall meditate upon God and talk on God and God alone.

The mind is everything. It changeth its nature according to the object—according to the things amongst which it liveth and acteth. The bondage is of the mind. Freedom is also of the mind. I am a free soul; be it in the world, or in the forest, I am not bound. I am the son of God, the son of the King of Kings. Who is there to bind me in fetters? In case thou art bitten by a snake, one way of getting rid of the venom is to make use of thy will-power and say, "There is no venom, there is no venom." The fool who saith without ceasing, "I am in bondage" doth, indeed, bring bondage on himself in the end. The wretch who saith eternally "I am a sinner, I am a sinner" turneth out a sinner, indeed.

The name of God when uttered through faith by a sinner shall bring salvation unto him. "What! have I not chanted His holy Name and must I be a sinner still? Must I still be in bondage?"—are words of faith in the Lord. Krishna-kishore was a pious Hindu, a Brahman of Brahman, who worshipped the Lord with a single-minded devotion. He went to Brindaban on pilgrimage. One day, while visiting the various shrines, he felt very thirsty. He went to a well where he found a man standing whom he asked, saying, "Sirrah, canst thou draw some water for me? What caste art thou?" The man replied, "Oh, divine Sir, I belong to a low caste, that of a cobbler." Krishna-kishore thereupon said to him, "It matters not; utter the name of the Lord; say, 'Siva, Siva,' and draw the water for me."

Chant the Name of God and, depend upon it, your body, mind and soul shall become pure.

SIVA*

By Julia P. Dabney

Silent, serene and sole,
Above the cloudy drifts and mists of Time,
Enthroned in isolation—vast, sublime,
Watching the sidereal systems roll—
The heart-beats of the universal whole—
 He sits supreme,
 Wrapped in a mystic dream,
Unmoved, and sees the fluctuant cycles pass
 Like winds through summer grass
 That leave no trace.
O mortal dost thou dare
 His presence face?
 Behold him there!
Inscrutable in awful majesty;
The crescent moon entangled in his hair,
His robes the flaming elements of space,
His eyes twin-suns that shroud their raying light
 Lest they should sere our sight;
 His resting place
 Infinitude.
Wrapped in a meditation so profound,
 A passion so intense
There may not penetrate a single sound
 From these dull realms of sense,
 Forever doth he brood
 To liberate the sons of men;
To rive illusion's chain,—
Fling *Maya* to the winds, and open free
The ultimate vision to mortality!

*Mahadeo or "The Great God"—Third Person of the Hindu Trinity.

BOOK OF DAILY THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

*Review**

The Swami's little book comes to me as a delightful breath from the calm seas of the spiritual world. This quiet little teacher of the ancient "wisdom religion" never mentions money, nor does he seem deeply concerned about the condition of the body, but goes directly towards his ideal, which is the endeavour to become conscious and lead his readers to a consciousness of that divine ray of light in the heart which proceeds from and is, therefore, essentially one with the sun of spiritual being. Swami Paramananda offers a prayer, a poem and a lesson for each day of the year, and every little essay is fragrant with the author's devotion to the "Divine Mother", whose arms are always open to her children. "We must rest our life on the fundamental facts of being," says the Swami. "If our life is empty we must fill it, and it can never be filled from outside. When we live in the Spirit, nothing can overthrow us."

The Swami's statement that "the world is conquered by that one whose mind rests in his spiritual being" might be challenged by those princes of the passion world who have demonstrated success in the material realm, yet the world of which the Swami writes is the world of self and the author is not the first man who has taught that there is no peace for the human heart short of self-mastery. As a matter of fact, there is probably nothing new in the Swami's book, but his words strike deep because of their simplicity, their profundity and above all, because of the fact that they were inspired by the conviction of one who demonstrates an unshakable peace in his daily life. . . .

* "The Times," Los Angeles, California.

REPORT

On October 25th Swami Paramananda left California for Boston after three months spent at the Ananda-Ashrama. All the activities of those busy months were noted in the October "Message" and there is little to add. September saw the termination of the lecture courses in nearby cities, so that the month of October was devoted almost exclusively to the Ashrama. The great Hindu religious festival, Durga Puja, or Feast of the Divine Mother, which lasts for three days, was celebrated by the members of the Ashrama household even as it is in India. The spirit of this great Feast, when the Mother aspect of Deity is felt to be peculiarly near and tender, is one of love and forgiveness even of one's enemies.

After the Swami's departure all Services and Classes at the Ashrama will be conducted by Swami Akhilananda, Swami Paramananda's assistant, who accompanied him on his recent return from India.

* * *

The following letter to the Swami from the Secretary of the Clovernook Institute for the Blind, near Cincinnati, brings peculiar satisfaction:—

"About two months ago we sent you six copies of selections from 'Soul's Secret Door'. This is the Braille book which we got out for Christmas and over a thousand were distributed. We also got out another small book of different selections in the New York Point and over a thousand of these were distributed. If you should find people who would enjoy reading the Point System we will send you several copies of this book. We thought the poems were so beautiful and most helpful and we wanted the blind to have them for Christmas. We enjoyed your lecture so much on the Fourth of July and we shall hope to see you in Cincinnati soon again."

WORKS BY SWAMI PARAMANANDA

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Message of the East



December, 1926

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"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tryndall

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December, 1926

No. 10

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

By Swami Paramananda

Holy, Holy, Holy,
Thou divine Compassion!
Unearthly on earth,
Thou tender Compassion!
We love Thee, we worship Thee,
We adore Thee,
Thou tender Compassion.
Thou hast healed us,
Thou hast redeemed us,
O Thou most holy, tender Compassion!
We kneel before Thee,
We bend before Thee;
Do Thou enfold us with Thy tender
compassion.
O Holy, Holy, Holy!

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

As the little waterdrop poured into a large measure of wine seems to lose its own nature entirely and to take on both the taste and the color of the wine, or as iron heated red-hot, loses its own appearance and glows like fire, or as air filled with sunlight is transformed into the same brightness so that it does not so much appear to be illuminated as to be itself light,—so must all human feeling toward the Holy One be self-dissolved in unspeakable wise, and wholly transfused into the will of God. For shall God be all in all if anything of man remains in man? The substance will indeed remain, but in another form, another glory, another power.—*Bernard of Clairvaux*

He is my Self within the heart,—smaller than a corn of rice, smaller than a corn of barley, smaller than a mustard seed, smaller than a canary seed or the kernel of a canary seed. He also is my Self within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven, greater than all these worlds.—*Khandogya Upanishad*

Continents, oceans, all things pass away
But One, One only; for the Eternal Mind
Enfolds all changes and can never change.

—*Alfred Noyes*

In every man's life pilgrimage, however unblest, there are holy places where he is made to feel his kinship with the Divine; where the heavens bend low over his head and angels come and minister unto him. These are the places of sacrifice, the meeting-ground of mortal and immortal, the tents of trial wherein are waged the great spiritual combats of man's life.—*Michael Monahan*

What we can do for another is the test of power; what we can suffer is the test of love.—*Bishop Westcott*

The soul when converted to herself, finds symbols of God in all things, even the smallest, and through these renders everything familiar and allied to God.—*Chaldean Oracle*

Children are much nearer the inner truth of things than we are, for when their instincts are not perverted by the superfine wisdom of their elders, they give themselves up to a full, vigorous activity. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—*Friedrich Froebel*

Love is a flame; once set it well alight,
All but the Beloved vanishes from sight.

—*Jalaluddin Rumi*

He breathes not the fragrance of divine mysteries whose head is not warmed by the heart.—*Wali*

He who proclaims the existence of the Infinite—and none can avoid it—accumulates in that affirmation more of the super-natural than is to be found in all the miracles of all the religions; for the notion of the Infinite presents that double character that it forces itself upon us and yet is incomprehensible. When this notion seizes upon our understanding, we can but kneel. . . . I see everywhere the inevitable expression of the Infinite in the world; through it, the supernatural is at the bottom of every heart. The idea of God is a form of the idea of the Infinite. As long as the mystery of the Infinite weighs on human thought, temples will be erected for the worship of the Infinite, whether God is called Brahma, Allah, Jehovah or Jesus; and on the pavement of those temples men will be seen kneeling, prostrated, annihilated in the thought of the Infinite.—*Louis Pasteur*

WHOLENESS OF LIFE*By Swami Paramananda*

“The man who knows his divine heritage, he becomes like unto it.” This is one of the most majestic sayings that has come down to us from the great Vedic revelation, and I think therein is contained the whole philosophy of life. A man’s greatness consists in his knowledge of his being, while his meanness, pettiness and unworthiness are directly due to his lack of knowledge of his being. Why does he fall into an ignoble state? Why does he become unworthy of himself? Why does he make a failure of himself? He would not do this deliberately. It is because he has lost sight of his real being. He begins to brood over his unworthiness, his sinfulness, his helplessness, but that does not relieve him from such conditions; it merely deepens these lines of thought, and so long as he allows his mind to go round and round over the self-same lines no one can rescue him. The only way of rescue is for him to find his connection with his Source. A very beautiful flower, the most choice flower you may pick from your garden, how long will it endure when it is severed from its root? It is the same way with life. Every individual life must have its definite connection with the Source. When that connection is lacking, it withers or expresses itself through unworthy channels.

In all religions there is the notion of sin and repentance. Indian philosophy and religion, however, give this dynamic, this very beneficial thought: that a man is not redeemed when he is constantly being reminded of his sin, sorrow and imperfection, but when he is reminded of his innate spiritual heritage. And what is that spiritual heritage? It is the finding of the wholeness of life. This is where

philosophy and religion are identical. Philosophy with its rationalism tries to discover the real part of man. Is it contained in his hands and feet, in his mind or brain? Where is his centre? As we go on analyzing and investigating along this line, we come to subtler and subtler provinces until, if we are fortunate enough, we find something which relates us to the great Immensity. Same thing is done through religion. Religion with its devotion, its supplications, its prayer and meditation, tries to find its contact with the Source of life. When we forget that, we remain but fragments, unrelated, insufficient, inadequate to ourselves and naturally to others. For this reason we are constantly reminded by all fundamental religious thought, "First seek ye the Kingdom of Truth; first seek ye the Kingdom of God; the Kingdom of God is within you." We at once say: "This is an old-fashioned idea; Christ may have expressed it, and Epictetus, the sages and the saints, but the man of to-day cannot apply it. In fact, he should not even venture to try to find his relationship with it." This is where we make the greatest mistake of our present life. We disregard something and put it aside merely because it seems to be what we call old-fashioned.

To-day we are facing a new phase in our human evolution. It is no longer a matter of what religion we have, or if some new religion is going to solve our problem. We have plenty of religions in the world and there is no question of inferiority or superiority. Fundamentally there is no difference between them. It is none but the very narrow person who finds differences. What we want to-day is the practical application of religion that will give us fundamental inspiration for our lives. Take this idea of the wholeness of life. We should try to get something

out of it and we should not carry it in an abstract form. We can easily do that. God is the whole of life and we the part, so very small that as we look around us, perhaps toward the infinite sky, or the infinite ocean, or as we see the glamour of the sun and moon of majestic Nature, we might easily take the attitude that we are so very insignificant it would be folly on the part of the individual to try to fathom such things or relate himself to them. This, however, would be the negative way of giving our tribute to Godhead.

There is another way of relating ourselves to It. No matter how grand, how vast, how infinite the universe may seem, we are part of it and as a part of it we are not weak, save when we feel unrelated to it. For instance, drops from the ocean, when they are separated, see how quickly they fade away; we cannot find them any more, but when these same drops remain related to the ocean, how mighty they are! That is the way of human life. We, with our self-interest and selfish whims, may drift entirely away from the Centre. If thoughts and feelings of self-seeking make us feel unrelated to the Source, then they become a very great hindrance. I do not think there can be any religion or philosophy in its fullest expression, so long as we encourage that element. We must guard ourselves against it. For instance, a man may assume an attitude of religion, of communing with Godhead, but do you suppose there could be such communion for one who has harsh feelings, unkind thoughts, or any narrow, biased attitude? Do you suppose the all-loving, all-just Father would accept any worship from a person who has no kindness in his heart? It would be impossible.

We can make our life very limited. How often a person is bored with himself, and how suffocated he feels!

He is weighted down with life. If we analyze why he is weighted down, we find it is because he has no avenue of expression. We cannot truly live if we go round and round ourselves in a little self-created circle. The soul wants expansion. Man's highest expression is found in that divine aspect which he has within. It is not that he is ever deprived of it. That spark of life may seem to grow very dim or indistinct, but he can revive it and when it is revived, we find great genius manifesting through him. That is the difference between one individual and another. Sometimes a man is afraid to think of anything other than himself. He allows himself to brood over his little self and self-interest, and whenever there is an opportunity for expression, for stepping out of himself, he bars it through fear. For instance, in modern life, if a man is taught, "First seek ye the Kingdom of God," at once we find this prejudiced attitude. He says: "Who is going to look after my interest, who is going to protect me, my family and my home?" Here is the conflict. We cannot think of two contradictory things at the same time. Man cannot be devoted to his ideal and at the same time think of his own little self. In fact, it is the greatest hindrance, and not only in the spiritual life. This idea enters into our practical life as well.

Once an artist came to me and said: "You do not seem to have any nervousness or self-consciousness; teach me the secret of self-forgetfulness." I replied: "There is no secret except this,—I do not think about myself." That is probably the secret of life. People sometimes stumble unconsciously on this great fact. They forget themselves, they lose themselves. This losing of self is the only proper and legitimate avenue through which we find our contact with the Source, the only thing that makes for wholeness

in our life and living. As we learn to think of that great Immensity, call It Father, or Mother, Divine Being, or Truth, or any name that is real to us, as we find our contact with That, this little self drops away from us, and we derive inspiration. Through worries and anxieties, we absolutely close our avenue of expression. This is something we must learn whether in religion or out of it. When we find some one bursting out in wonderful music or song, we may know that it is not through calculation. When a person has reached the very height of genius, it is not by ordinary means that he has risen there. He did not think every step of the way, "I am going to do this, and I am going to do that." Such thought would be entirely alien to his mind; he sought first his ideal and everything else was added. That is the only way we make these things possible. That is my interpretation of, "First seek ye the Kingdom of God." We go to the Source, we touch the wholeness of life and every part of our being is filled. Our hands are more vibrant, our mind is more vibrant, our entire being is recharged with life.

There is no self or self-interest in the realm of religion, whether it is Christian, Hindu, Buddhist or Chinese. Life, when it comes to fruition, opens only one channel and that is the channel of self-forgetfulness. When man keeps that channel open, we find that he is refreshed and revived. All his restlessness is removed and he becomes an instrument in the hands of Divinity. We may plan very carefully that whenever we think, whenever we speak, whenever we walk, whatever we do, we shall carry this idea that we are instruments of God. It is a very noble resolution, but we are likely to forget it unless it has become innate, fundamental. That means we have to live the life. We have to think, meditate, pray. We have to make our life

so consistent that there is no possibility of falling away from our ideal. There is a way of creating rhythm in this our inner life and in our outer life. In fact, there should not be any conflict between them. In order to have real helpfulness, there should be absolute harmony, everything running in unison.

Let us take it from the practical, material point of view. When a person has a sense of unison in his physical body, in his physical life, when his hands and feet, his mind and brain and his aspirations are all working together with one idea, with one thought,—what a beautiful picture that person makes; and not only a picture of calmness, serenity and one-pointedness, he radiates tremendous power. When he undertakes a task, he accomplishes it because there is nothing to distract him. His hands are not preying on his heart, his mind is not preying on his brain. It is the picture of the wholeness of life. Now, if so much can be accomplished through concentrated, unified effort, through a resolute mind and brain, how much more can be done when all our faculties, when our whole being runs in unison and is united with the great Immensity. This is not done by accident. For instance, a man may believe that if he can make his connection with his Source, he will become a genius, a powerful factor in life; but he cannot lead a life that is inconsistent: he cannot have harsh thoughts, unkind feelings, small and petty ideas and at the same time find his relationship with That which is infinite. Whoever becomes an instrument for That, he is redeemed. It transforms his life. His thoughts are radiant and even his body becomes radiant. His whole being radiates That which abides within him. Again there are those who are so dense, so crude, so restless in their attitude, that whenever they touch any life they make it

aware of that restlessness and unhappiness. We do not need to preach or to cry out in loud tone what we believe in, what we have within us, for as soon as it reaches fruition in a natural way, we become the symbol of it.

In our talking, in our walking, in our casual contact with human beings, we are constantly giving out what we are. The greatest safeguard and security a man can have is to realize this. No matter who he is, though he may have risen to great power in a material way, if he lacks this sense of his Source, of his Origin, his power will amount to nothing. It may be that something will crush his whole life and all his hopes and ambitions, as we see sometimes in the lives of mighty and powerful men. Only here and there do we find characters which stand out and remain as models before humanity. These are not aggressors, but gentle. They want nothing for themselves, and even whatever material goods they have, they give away that others may benefit by them. This complete detachment from all sense of possession and self-assertion brings them to the fullness of life. In other words, it is not by acquiring wealth that we find happiness. Sometimes people who have slaved for themselves and have sacrificed their comfort and well-being in order to earn wealth, find that it is the greatest burden.

There are cases where men have committed suicide because their wealth had unbalanced their mind. "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world?" That is the eternal challenge. No matter how clever, how intellectual we may be, we cannot do otherwise than heed these fundamental injunctions of life. We cannot neglect the attributes of the spiritual for the sake of the fleeting, and still find the fulfillment of life. In fact we do not even accomplish those things that we desire to accomplish

in a material way until we have unified our interest with the spiritual. It is not that there is anything against the material life. We live in this world and we must make the best of it, but in order to make the best of it, we must have guidance, assurance and assistance from the Highest. To be able to live in this world and not be swept by its glamour shows balance of life, and it is this balance which leads us to higher wisdom. What is religion for, but to give us this aid in the midst of all unnatural conditions, so that we may have a sense of stability, a sense that there is a great Power, a mighty beneficent Force which never abandons us even when we make mistakes and do something wrong and ignoble. It is well to be repentant, but do not let repentance drag you down. Do not be as some people are, crushed by it. The greatest calamity of life is not so much to commit a blunder, as to allow it to seize hold of us so that we cannot think of anything else, so that we have no other idea but the idea of self-depreciation and self-pity. Then it becomes a calamity.

We overcome evil by good, we overcome weakness by strength, we overcome sin by purity, we overcome all darkness by the Light of God. If we can hold that in our heart, in our mind, in our soul, then there is no danger. A man carrying a lamp in his hand so that he may never be in the dark is a symbolic expression of life. We should always carry the light of divine intelligence in our mind. You may say, "Where shall I find it? How can I find it? My mind is very limited; I have not that divine intelligence." Of course you have. We all have it. In some cases it is burning very dimly and indistinctly, but that which burns so dim and is now so insufficient can be made to burn effulgently. Here is where the individual effort comes in. I often think of the little parable of the man

who came home one night and found that his fire had died down altogether. There was just a little flickering lamp burning in his house; so he took that and went from door to door, begging for fuel and fire from his neighbors. One or two refused him; then the third neighbor said: "Foolish man, why come to me? You have a light in your own hand; go and gather some fuel and light your own fire. There is enough flame in that little lamp to burn a whole kingdom." Same way it is with us. In our ignorance, misconception and misguided zeal, we think that our life is gone, that there is nothing of value left in it. We cry out in despair and hope in a vague, indefinite way that a Saviour will come and save us. But even if he comes, our ears may be deaf to his voice.

Our real work begins within. It is like a house-cleaning process. If the mind is not freed from harshness, if the heart is not freed from blemish, how can they contain the saving grace? And what are the thoughts that make for blemish? We cannot have unkind feelings in our soul and not show it, no matter how much we may pray outwardly, nor what may be the nature of the religion we profess. God is not a respecter of persons, of creed or of dogma. He takes us as we are. Do you suppose that when we go to the Kingdom of God that we are going to carry a stamp or a label showing that we belong to this or that? We go to Him as children and we must go to Him with a sense that we are related to Him and always have been. Our misguided zeal sometimes has made us feel that we are insignificant, that we are puny; but this is not so. To realize that we are here not through accident, not through some chance, not led by some arbitrary power, but as distinct factors in that great, beneficent, all powerful, unbounded Spirit,—this realization is to my

mind the fruition of all spiritual living. What a tremendous strength it infuses into the life of man! There is nothing which brings such quick response within the soul as this thought. As for healing and similar things, whenever you are sick, whenever you are morbid, whenever you feel that there is nothing you can lay your hand upon, look within; gaze on that fundamental Truth, and do not let the world make you believe that you are insignificant, that you are a sinner, that you are nothing.

Always cling to the fact that you are a child of God. That is the way we gain our wholeness of life, and not by gathering the goods of the world. There are those who think they are going to be rich by gaining a little bit of wealth, but that is not the way to accomplish it. It is only when we give our little life with perfect freedom, with absolute courage unto That from which we have come. Then our cup is filled, and not only does it suffice our own individual need, but we have something to give to others. Do you know how we give to others? Not so much through the spoken word. Do not feel that you have to become a preacher or public benefactor in order to do good to your fellow-men. There is not a moment in our life when we cannot render service. We do it sometimes with a look or a smile, sometimes with a word, with an expression, or with a task. If you have that fullness of life, you carry it within yourself. If your heart is flooded with joyousness, cheerfulness and peace, because you have known the Source of this life, you cannot help but convey them to those around you. On the other hand, if you carry a dead weight with you, although you may have a tremendous amount of sympathy for others, you cannot remove their sorrows or remedy the evils of this world. It is only when we realize wholeness, when we feel the sense of wholeness, al-

most to overflowing, that we render real service. Then our very existence becomes a benediction to ourselves and to our fellow-beings.

FLOWER LEGENDS

By Charles M. Skinner

(The ordinary flowers which sweeten our daily life have a deeper significance than we usually are aware of. Time and association have transformed them long ago into religious symbols, weaving around them innumerable legends which connect them with the spiritual life of man. Few people of to-day know these tender and delicate fancies of a more poetic age, but occasionally they are revived for us as in the case of the "Star of Bethlehem" and the "Christmas Rose," whose angelic origin retold by Mr. Skinner in his "Myths and Legends of Flowers, Trees, Fruits and Plants," we give below.)

The little flower we call Star of Bethlehem, whose bulb is roasted and eaten by Orientals, is part of that very light which shone in the heavens at the birth of Christ; for after it had led the wise men and shepherds to the manger it burst, like a meteor, scattering acres of flowers about the fields. It was as if it had been drawn from the glorious company of the skies by the great glory of the Babe. Joseph, going out at dawn, gathered handfuls of these blossoms from the wintry earth, and, pouring them into the lap of Mary, said, "See, the star in the east has fallen and borne fruit in kind."

Then, there is hellebore, otherwise black hellebore, Christmas rose, or Christmas flower. The story of its birth is this: On the night when heaven sang to the shepherds of Bethlehem, a little girl followed her brothers, the keepers of the flocks, under guidance of the light. When

she saw the wise men gathered at the inn, offering vessels of gold and fabrics of silk to the Child and its mother, she hung timidly back on the edge of the crowd, and was sad because her hands were empty; because the look in the face of the Babe had filled her with admiration and wonder, and she wished to testify her love. She had no goods, no money to buy them, so after a little she turned away toward the silent hills. But when she had gone back to her flocks, at the border of the desert, under the lonely stars, a light suddenly shone about her, and behold, one of the announcing angels—a glorious creature, whose robe was like molten silver, whose locks were as the sun—asked: “Little one, why do you carry sorrow in your heart?”

“Because I could carry no joy to the Child of Bethlehem,” she answered.

With a smile the spirit waved a lily that he carried, and suddenly the ground was white with Christmas roses. The girl knelt with a joyous cry, filled her arms with the flowers, and hastened to the village, where the people made way for her, looking with wonder on the burden she bore that wintry night. As she reached the manger the Holy One, turning from the gems and gold of the magi, reached forth His tiny hands for the blossoms, and smiled as the shepherdess heaped them at His feet.

THE CHRIST-CHILD

By Saint Gregory of Nareck

(Armenian Saint of the 10th Century)

The lips of the Christ-child are like to twin leaves,—
They let roses fall when He smiles tenderly.
The tears of the Christ-child are pearls when He grieves;
The eyes of the Christ-child are deep as the sea.
Like pomegranate grains are the dimples He hath,
And clustering lilies spring up in His path.

DIVINE QUALITIES

By Chuang Tzu

In Lu there was a Wang Thai (Taoist saint) who had lost both his feet; while his disciples who followed and went about with him were as numerous as those of Chung-ni (Confucius). Chang Chi asked Chung-ni about him, saying, "Though Wang Thai is a cripple, the disciples who follow him about divide Lu equally with you, Master. When he stands, he does not teach them; when he sits, he does not discourse to them. But they go to him empty, and come back full. Is there indeed such a thing as instruction without words? and while the body is imperfect, may the mind be complete? What sort of man is he?"

Chung-ni replied, "This master is a sage. I have only been too late in going to him. I will make him my teacher; and how much more should those do so who are not equal to me! Why should only the State of Lu follow him? I will lead on all under heaven with me to do so." Chang Chi rejoined, "He is a man who has lost his feet, and yet he is known as the venerable Wang; he must be very different from ordinary men. What is the peculiar way in which he employs his mind?" The reply was, "Death and life are great considerations, but they could work no change in him. Though heaven and earth were to be overturned and fall, they would occasion him no loss. His judgment is fixed regarding that in which there is no element of falsehood; and, while other things change, he changes not. The transformations of things are to him the developments prescribed for them, and he keeps fast hold of the Author of them."

Chang Chi said, "What do you mean?" "When we look at things," said Chung-ni, "as they differ, we see them to be different, as for instance the liver and the gall, or Chu

and Yueh; when we look at them, as they agree, we see them all to be a unity. So it is with this Wang Thai. He takes no knowledge of the things for which his ears and eyes are the appropriate organs, but his mind delights itself in the harmony of all excellent qualities. He looks at the unity which belongs to things, and does not perceive where they have suffered loss. He looks on the loss of his feet as only the loss of so much earth."

Chang Chi said, "He is entirely occupied with his proper Self. By his knowledge he has discovered the nature of his mind, and to that he holds as what is unchangeable; but how is it that men make so much of him?" The reply was, "Men do not look into the running water as a mirror, but into still water; it is only the still water that can arrest them all, and keep them in the contemplation of their real selves. Of things which are what they are by the influence of the earth, it is only the pine and cypress which are the best instances; in winter as in summer brightly green. Of those which were what they were by the influence of Heaven, the most correct examples were Yao and Shun; fortunate in thus maintaining their own life correct, and so as to correct the lives of others.

"As a verification of the power of the original endowment, when it has been preserved, take the result of fearlessness—how the heroic spirit of a single brave soldier has been thrown into an army of nine hosts. If a man only seeking for fame and able in this way to secure it, can produce such an effect, how much more may we look for a greater result from one whose rule is over heaven and earth, and holds all things in his treasury, who simply has his lodging in the six members of his body, whom his ears and eyes serve but as conveying emblematic images of things, who comprehends all his knowledge in a unity and

whose mind never dies! If such a man were to choose a day on which he would ascend far on high, men would seek to follow him there. But how should he be willing to occupy himself with other men?"

LAW OF LOVE

By Mahatma M. K. Gandhi

I observe in the limited field in which I find myself, that unless I can reach the hearts of men and women, I am able to do nothing. I observe further that so long as the spirit of hate persists in some shape or other, it is impossible to establish peace or to gain our freedom by peaceful effort. We cannot love one another if we hate Englishmen. We cannot love the Japanese and hate Englishmen. We must either let the law of love rule us through and through or not at all. Love among ourselves based on hatred of others breaks down under the slightest pressure. The fact is, such love is never real love. It is an armed peace. And so it will be in this great movement in the West against war. War will only be stopped when the conscience of mankind has become sufficiently elevated to recognize the undisputed supremacy of the Law of Love in all the walks of life. Some say this will never come to pass. I shall retain the faith till the end of my earthly existence that it shall come to pass.

Truly the Lord hath done great things for us! He hath given us the sight and knowledge of Himself in His Son, which is life eternal; He hath given us of the nature and spirit of His Son; He hath given us of the true faith, whereby the just lives and obtains victory over death and grave; He hath given us of the hope which purifies the heart and stays the mind in all storms; He hath given us of the Lamb's patience and meekness.—*Isaac Penington*

DVIJENDRA LAL RAY AND HIS TIMES

By Prabhucharan Guhathakurta, M. A., Ph. D.

(Compiled from "The Bengali Drama, Its Origin and Development," the paper presented by Dr. Guhathakurta to the University of London, for his Doctorate's degree.)

(Dvijendra Lal Ray was one of the most noted of modern Bengali poets and dramatists. In addition to the stimulus he was instrumental in giving to the drama, the influence he exerted upon the ideals and ideas of young India, has been far-reaching and powerful. Although in accordance with dramatic propriety, he never posed as a doctrinaire or a moral preacher, he became an upbuilding force along conservative lines, looking with a cautious eye upon the idea of a revolution which threatened to sweep away the sacred heritage of the past. He heartily welcomed the nationalist movement as a cleansing and constructive influence, but insisted that it must build society on firmer and saner lines.)

The first appearance of Dvijendra Lal Ray as a dramatist synchronises with the beginning of the *Svadesi Andolan* or Nationalist movement. A true understanding of the work of this writer is not possible without a clear view of the place of that movement in Bengali life and thought. To a superficial observer the movement will appear as the direct outcome of Lord Curzon's measure for the partition of Bengal in 1905. But as a matter of fact, this was the occasion rather than the cause of the movement and all that it connoted. No doubt the measure itself stirred Bengal to an unprecedented political and economic unrest, as it was interpreted as a challenge to Bengali manhood, and as a deliberate attempt by the British government to break the solidarity of Bengali life and spirit; but the new national consciousness which reacted so dramatically in 1905

was the product of a large number of forces which had been in operation many years before. . .

It was inevitable that young Bengalis who had placed in their hands as text books the political writings of John Stuart Mill, the speeches of Burke, the poems of Shelley, the prose and poetry of Milton and the writings of Carlyle and Ruskin, should develop an attitude to political problems very different from the inertia which had hitherto characterized their countrymen. For a long time Bengal had been out of touch with the current of world history and now suddenly awoke to a conception of its own destiny in relation to other nations of the world. And so Western education which seemed at first to threaten to sweep away everything Indian, eventually came to have precisely the opposite effect, and by bringing Bengalis face to face with the facts of world-history compelled them to reconsider the achievements of their own past and awakened in them a yearning for the revival of the ancient glories of the Hindu race. . .

Though it is not easy to fix a date for the actual commencement of the new national consciousness, the time of Raja Ram Mohan Ray and the Governor Generalship of Lord William Bentinck may be taken as the approximate starting point. Raja Ram Mohan Ray staunchly supported the cause of the revival of ancient Hindu culture in its more spiritual aspects. He stood against the prevalent tide of unmeaning imitation of Western institutions. He thought it desirable to attempt a synthesis of whatever was best in the life and thought of both India and Europe. Then came Maharsi Debendra Nath Tagore, the father of the poet Rabindra Nath Tagore, with his movement of social and religious reform. Among other men of outstanding personality and character who influenced Bengali life and

thought of the 19th century, the names of Kesab Chandra Sen, the religious reformer, Pandit Isvar Chandra Vidya-sagar, the distinguished educationalist and social reformer and Bankim Chandra Chatterji and Bhudeb Mukherji, the two literary giants, are certainly the most noteworthy. . . . Swami Vivekananda wrote and lectured on the problems of national regeneration and devoted his efforts especially to the cause of uplifting the poor and depressed classes. His writings and speeches were characterized by a strong spiritual fervour and moral courage and made a great appeal to the imagination of the youths of his time. His message reached as far as America in the "Chicago Conference of World Religions."

At the close of 1904, a strong impulse was given to the national movement by the Russo-Japanese war. . . . The people of India regarded the Japanese victory from a purely Oriental standpoint. They felt that the past glory and greatness of Asia were just beginning to return and the days of servitude to the European races were over. The announcement in the latter part of 1904 of the project for the partition of Bengal came as a direct challenge to the pent-up nationalistic enthusiasm which had been developing all these years and provided it with a definite objective and programme. The *Svadesi Andolan* swept over Bengal like a flood and produced a political upheaval quite unparalleled in its annals. The immediate object (viz., the boycott of British goods) was only partially achieved. But the most important result of the movement was that it raised Bengal as a whole to a national self-consciousness which was to produce later effects such as could not have been foreseen by the keenest political prophets.

Dvijendra Lal Ray was deeply stirred by the *Svadesi Andolan*, and for a time almost completely threw himself

into it. But at heart, he was too genuine a realist to be overcome by it. He was so mentally constituted that he could not for a moment lose his own individuality, and so he escaped from becoming a firebrand patriot, or a fanatical demagogue. His devotion to the motherland, as expressed even in his very first historical work, "*Rana Pratap*", which was no doubt written in these very stirring times, has not the slightest tinge of egotism or insincerity. His sobriety of temperament and his sanity of mental outlook are quite manifest.

On his return to India after finishing his studies in England he had found himself alienated from his best friends. He had been subjected to social ostracism by his relatives on account of his independent ways and his frank indifference to many of the Hindu social customs and practices. Being a youth of very independent ideas he had been deeply mortified at this treatment which seemed to him quite unjustifiable. Naturally, his views on nationalism were from the very beginning coloured by his views on Hindu society. He found that the problems of social reform and the new aspiration for political freedom were indissolubly linked together and never lost sight of the fact that if the country was to become politically free, it must first become free from social evils.

As early as 1889, he had published a pamphlet called "*Ekghare*" (Outcast), giving his views on the treatment meted out by Hindu society to youths who had visited England, and in it he bitterly criticised Hindu orthodoxy in language which was very sarcastic and even provocatively harsh. Through these experiences of his early career, he had come definitely to believe that not everything in Hinduism was wholesome and good, and that nationalism by itself was not enough to uplift India. Indian manhood must

be regenerated before everything else. This he makes clear in the concluding song in "*Rana Pratap*" which the heroic Rajput maidens sing in chorus. The burden of the song is: "What matters it that you have lost your land? Be you yourselves men once more!" In fact this seems to contain the essence of Dvijendra Lal's creed. He will have nothing to do with that freedom which does not come of inner spiritual strength. Social evils will have to be rectified in the first instance and then freedom will follow of itself. He had also very clear ideas as regards the exact nature of the disease that was eating into the vitals of society and so he could not be oblivious to the difficulties that had to be overcome before real success could be attained. Perhaps the most characteristic expression of Dvijendra Lal's whole social and political philosophy is to be found in the following scene, (Act V. Scene 6,) in "*Rana Pratrap*":

Gwalior: (looking at Marwar). I told you, didn't I?—that it was useless to expect to win over Man Simha. Freedom for India is but a dream.

Man Simha: Freedom, your Highness? If we had any national life, we might talk about freedom. We lost that life ages ago; and now the nation is rotting.

Chandori: How?

Man Simha: Do I have to prove that, too? This endless idleness, this indifference, this inertia—is not a sign of national life. A Drabir Brahman will not dine with a Brahman of Benares. You lose your caste if you cross the seas. Religion which is the life-breath of this nation is merely a social convention to-day. There are no signs of national life. The good old days are gone.

Bikanir: But they may come back if the Hindus are united.

Man Simha: It's just that that's impossible. The souls of the Hindus have so shrivelled up, have become so inert and cut-off from one another that unity is out of the question.

Gwalior: Will it never be possible?

Man Simha: Yes, but not till the Hindus freed from the bondage of lifeless, meaningless, outworn conventions get a new religion throbbing with living, wide-awake, magnetic energy. . . .

Marwar: Man Simha speaks the truth.

It will be noticed that Dvijendra Lal's whole emphasis is on the attainment of national unity and harmony and casting off the fetters of an antiquated social system. His conception of an ideal Hindu society and the means of attaining true freedom for India is most fully revealed in the conversation between the two noble heroines of the play, "*Mewar Patan*," (Act V. Scene 4.):

Satyavati: When did this downfall of Marwar begin, my child?

Manasi: It began from the day when she allowed herself to be led blindfolded by social conventions, from the day when she forgot to think for herself. Mother, the water is pure so long as the stream runs. When the stream stops, worms breed in it. That's why you see in this nation to-day so much base selfishness, meanness, internal strife and hatred of other races. From that point on, this liberal Hindu religion has become a mere lifeless skeleton of convention. What but downfall is possible when religion is lost, Mother? Nobody has time to notice that this nation is full of vice. What's the good of merely weeping and saying "Mewar is ruined?"

Satyavati: Is this then the only consolation for our sorrow?

Manasi: No. We have a far better consolation, which is this: Mewar is ruined; let it go! But let us aim at something better in the future than its mere restoration. I want my brother to be great in moral strength. I want him to make religion his life's pole star in the midst of all his sorrow and despair and the darkness of the storm. And if he won't, let him perish; I shall have no regrets.

Satyavati: Am I to stand and watch my brother perish?

Manasi: We will try our best to save him. But if we can't, let God's will be done. Patriotism is greater than self-seeking but manhood is greater than patriotism. If patriotism conflicts with manhood, let patriotism be drowned in the sea of manhood. Though it lose land and freedom, let our race attain to manhood again.

Satyavati: Can that ever be, my child?

Manasi: Why not? Let us strive for it. A high ideal never dies. This nation shall surely regain its manhood.

Satyavati: But when?

Manasi: The day when the people will cast off the age-worn scriptures and adopt a new religion.

Satyavati: What's that religion, Manasi?

Manasi: That religion is love. They will first have to forget their own selves and gradually learn to love their brethren, their race, mankind and manhood. Then there will be nothing more for them on their own account to do. Their future will shape itself by some unknown law of Providence. The way to national welfare lies not through bloodshed but through love. . . .

Dvijendra Lal Ray was one of the very few among the noted Bengalis of that period who refrained from holding out an ideal of narrow-minded nationalism, and insisted on the development of national unity and mutual tolerance.

THE ETERNAL BALANCE

By Swami Vivekananda

Wherever there is a thing really needed in one part of the world, the complement will always find its way there and supply it with new life. This is true in the physical world, as well as in the spiritual. If there is a want of spirituality in one part of the world, and at the same time that spirituality exists elsewhere, whether we consciously struggle for it or not, that spirituality will find its way to the part where it is needed and balance the inequality.

In the history of the human race, not once or twice, but again and again, it has been the destiny of India in the past to supply spirituality to the world; and, as such, we find that wherever either by mighty conquest or by commercial supremacy, different parts of the world have been kneaded into one whole race, and bequests have been made from one corner to the other; each nation, as it were, poured forth its own quota, either political, social, or spiritual.

India's contribution to the sum total of human knowledge has been spirituality, philosophy. These she contributed even long before the rising of the Persian Empire. The second time was during the Persian Empire; for the third time, during the ascendancy of the Greeks; and now for the fourth time during the ascendancy of the English, she is going to fulfill the same destiny once more. As Western ideas of organization and external civilization are penetrating and pouring into our country, whether we will have them or not, so, Indian spirituality and philosophy are deluging the lands of the West. None can resist it, and no more can we resist some sort of civilization from the West. A little of it, perhaps, is good for us, and a little spiritualization is good for the West; thus the balance is preserved.

It is not that we ought to learn everything from the West, or that they have to learn everything from us, but each will have to supply and hand down to future generations what it has, for the future accomplishment of that dream of ages, the harmony of nations, an ideal world.

CHRISTIAN AND INFIDEL

By William Law

This, therefore, is the one true essential distinction between the Christian and the infidel. The infidel is a man of this world, wholly devoted to it, his hope and faith are set upon it, for where our heart is, there and there only is our hope and faith. He has only such virtue, such goodness and such a religion as entirely suits with the interest of flesh and blood and keeps the soul happy in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life: this and this alone is infidelity, a total separation from God and a removal of all faith and hope from Him into the life of this world. It matters not whether this infidel be a professor of the Gospel, a disciple of Zoroaster, a follower of Plato, a Jew, a Turk, or an opposer of the Gospel history: this difference of opinion or professions alters not the matter, it is the love of the world instead of God that constitutes the whole nature of the infidel.

On the other hand, the Christian renounces the world,—he turns from all that is earthly, animal and temporal and stands in a continual tendency of faith and hope and prayer to God to have a better nature, a better life and spirit born again into him from above. Where this faith is, there is the Christian, the new creature in Christ, born of the Word and Spirit of God. Neither time nor place nor any outward condition of birth and life can hinder his entrance into the Kingdom of God.

REPORT

On Monday, October 25th, Swami Paramananda left Ananda-Ashrama for his Boston Centre, breaking the trip on Thursday at Chicago where friends greeted him with warm hospitality and where in the afternoon he gave a brief address before the Kenmore Club on "World Brotherhood and Universality." There were many earnest requests that he remain over another day, but his heart was too eagerly turned towards Boston to permit of his doing so. He arrived in Boston late Friday and on Sunday had the joy of meeting many old and true friends at the two regular services, one at eleven in the morning and the other at eight in the evening.

On the third Sunday after his arrival, at the invitation of Rev. Albert C. Grier, Pastor of the "Church of the Truth", the Swami left for New York immediately following the morning Service, arriving there in time to conduct the Church's evening Service at the Hotel McAlpin. There was a large and very appreciative congregation present, the members of which expressed in no uncertain manner, their desire that the Swami return the following week. On noon of the next day the Swami held a meditation Class at the hotel, taking as his theme "The Rhythm of Life." Dr. Elliot White, Assistant Rector of Grace Church, New York, who happened to be present, was called upon by Dr. Grier to introduce the Swami. This he did with true depth of feeling and appreciation, even as Dr. Grier had done the preceding night. On Tuesday afternoon the Swami returned to Boston.

* * * * *

Since Swami Paramananda's departure for the East, all Services and Classes at Ananda-Ashrama have been conducted by his assistant, Swami Akhilananda. Those who have heard the Swami have appreciated his simple, direct manner of presenting the teaching and the earnestness and fervour of spirit he expresses through his words. The Swami will continue to conduct all meetings until Swami Paramananda's return.

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